

THE IMPACT OF COLLABORATIVE LITERACY COACHING ON MIDDLE AND  
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERSONAL AND GENERAL SENSE OF EFFICACY  
FOR LITERACY TEACHING

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By

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Submitted to the graduate degree program in Curriculum and Teaching  
and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative multiple participant case study was to understand the impact of a nine month collaborative literacy coaching (CLC) initiative on middle and high school content teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. A variety of data, including but not limited to transcripts of weekly collaborative literacy coaching cadres, individual participant interviews, *Initial* and *Follow-up Questionnaires* allowed three middle and high school teachers to describe in their own words how the CLC initiative impacted their sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Information from the participants were collected and analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The data organized into themes that suggested the participants believed they were responsible for student learning, framed barriers as instructional problems, not student problems, perceived CLC as a tool to help solve instructional challenges, and engaged in the collaborative process to help realize teaching and learning successes. Their participation resulted in increased levels of confidence, which in turn enhanced their existing positive general efficacy beliefs and changed their low or negative personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. In addition, several aspects of the CLC initiative were perceived as important to participants' efficacy development. More specifically, data indicated that participants' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching were positively impacted by having access to a variety of professional resources, time to try new practices within the context of their own classrooms, ongoing opportunities for collaboration, and access to and support of a literacy coach.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*I know that with writing you start where you are, and you flail around for a while, and if you keep doing it, everyday you get closer to something good.*

*-Anne Lamott*

This dissertation would not be complete without the help and support of many people.

First, I wish to acknowledge the guidance, encouragement, and flexibility of my advisor, Dr. Arlene Barry, as well as all of the other members of my committee, Dr. Don Deshler, Dr. Karen Jorgensen, Dr. Donita Massingill-Shaw, and Dr. Diane Nielsen. I have been positively influenced and supported in many ways by each of them over the years and look forward to opportunities to collaborate in the future.

Second, I want to acknowledge and thank my many friends and colleagues who have also supported and encouraged me throughout my studies and the writing of this dissertation. In particular, Susan Oestreicher who mentored me as a young teacher and reading specialist, quoting often Quincy Jones, “I’m going to grow until I go!” Dr. Janet Allen who evolved from one of my many adolescent reading rock stars to a friend and mentor whose influences on my professional thinking and work would take an entire book to capture. Dr. Cheryl L. H. Atkinson, a public school leader who exudes intelligence, integrity, and intense commitment to improvement, who not only supported my academic work and believed in me, but knows what it means to “lift as you climb.”

Next, I also wish to acknowledge several individuals within the district and schools where my study took place. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Jean McCally for opening the door to conduct research in her district and Dr. Randy Oliver for providing the kind of leadership necessary for Collaborative Literacy Coaching to be

successful. Additionally, I am indebted to the three teachers, “Margaret, Katherine, and Mary Kate,” who served as participants in my study. I learned so much from these three hardworking professionals and as a bonus I gained three incredible new friends. Without their stories, this dissertation would not exist. I will be forever grateful they allowed me as well as others to learn from their journey.

Lastly, but most importantly, I wish to acknowledge my family. This dissertation is dedicated to them. In particular, I want to thank my husband, my parents, my sisters and their husbands, my nieces, my nephews, and members of the Howe Family. No one knows my story and the story of this endeavor better than they do. I wish to thank them for encouraging me to keep writing all the way to the end. Additionally, I hope they all (not just my mom) enjoy reading it!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	xii
Chapter 1 – Introduction.....	1
Rationale for the Study.....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Theoretical Framework.....	8
Definition of Terms.....	9
Dissertation Outline.....	12
Chapter 2 –Literature Review.....	14
Literacy Teaching.....	15
Comprehension Research and Literacy Teaching.....	22
Resistance to Literacy Teaching.....	26
Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy.....	33
Teacher Efficacy.....	34
Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy and Professional Development.....	47
Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy and Content Literacy.....	57
Literacy Coaching.....	64
Literacy Coaching as a Form of Professional Development.....	65
From Reading Specialists to Literacy Coaches.....	67

Impact of Literacy Coaching.....	70
Early Descriptive Studies – Districts and Programs.....	71
Early Studies of Impact of Literacy Coaching and Student Achievement.....	76
Early Studies of Impact of Literacy Coaching and Teachers’ Knowledge and Practices.....	78
Recent Studies of Impact of Literacy Coaching on Teachers’ Practices and/or Student Achievement.....	79
Literacy Coaching Models.....	83
Impact of Statewide Literacy Coaching Initiatives.....	97
Alabama.....	98
Kentucky.....	99
Pennsylvania.....	104
South Carolina Reading Initiative.....	108
Teachers’ Perceptions of Coaching.....	110
Summary.....	111
Chapter 3 – Methodology.....	113
Qualitative and Case Study Methodology.....	115
Selection of Participants.....	117
Introduction of Case Study Participants.....	121
Context.....	126
Description of the Community and Schools.....	128
Role of the Researcher.....	129
Collaborative Literacy Coaching Initiative Overview.....	130
Required Weekly Literacy Coaching Cadre.....	134

Reflection and Inquiry.....	135
Classroom Experience.....	135
Feedback.....	136
Theory and Content Knowledge-Building.....	136
Optional After-School Study Group.....	138
Optional One-on-One Literacy Coaching.....	140
Optional Extended Professional Development Opportunities.....	141
Data Collection.....	143
Teacher Background and Demographic Information Sheet.....	143
<i>Initial Questionnaire</i> .....	144
<i>Follow-up Questionnaire</i> .....	145
Weekly Collaborative Literacy Coaching Cadres.....	145
Classroom Observations.....	146
Interviews.....	147
Optional After-School Study Group.....	148
Field Notes.....	149
Other Supporting Documents.....	149
Participants' Reflection Journals.....	149
Data Analysis.....	151
Validity, Trustworthiness, and Limitations.....	152
Validity.....	152
Trustworthiness.....	153



Limitations.....	156
Chapter 4 – Assertions.....	158
Question One.....	158
Margaret.....	162
Katherine.....	219
Mary Kate.....	268
Assertion One.....	307
Question Two.....	308
Themes that Emerged to Support Assertion Two.....	309
Access to a Variety of Professional Learning Resources, Experiences, and Instructional Materials.....	310
Time and Opportunity to Try New Practices within the Context of Their Own Classrooms, Reflect on New Learnings, and Participate in Ongoing Professional Collaboration.....	316
Opportunity to Collaborate with Colleagues on a Regular and Ongoing Basis.....	328
Access to and Support of a Literacy Coach.....	335
Assertion Two.....	339
Summary.....	339
Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusions.....	342
Discussion of Assertion One.....	343
Discussion of Assertion Two.....	349
Positive Aspects of Collaborative Literacy Coaching.....	350

Theme One: Access to a Variety of Instructional Materials, Professional Resources and Other Professional Experiences.....	351
Theme Two: Time to Try New Practices within Classroom Context, Reflect on New Learnings, and Participate in Ongoing Professional Collaborations.....	353
Theme Three: Opportunity for Regular and Ongoing Collaboration with Colleagues.....	360
Theme Four: Access to and Support from a Literacy Coach.....	362
Conclusions.....	366
Implications for Professional Practice.....	368
Directions for Research.....	371
Limitations.....	374
Concluding Thoughts.....	375
References.....	377
Appendices.....	406
Appendix A: Participant Selection Information.....	406
Appendix B: Teacher Information Sheet.....	407
Appendix C: Participant Letter and Consent Form.....	409
Appendix D: <i>Initial Questionnaire</i> .....	412
Appendix E: <i>Human Subjects Consent Form</i> #15393.....	416
Appendix F: <i>Follow-up Questionnaire</i> .....	417
Appendix G: Partial List of Professional Texts, Articles, and Resources Provided to Participants.....	421
Appendix H: Sample Weekly Middle School Cadre Agenda.....	428

Appendix I: Sample Weekly High School Cadre Agenda.....	430
Appendix J: Timeline for Data Collection.....	431
Appendix K: Sample Field Notes and Classroom Observation Form.....	432
Appendix L: Interview Guide.....	433

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1	Time in Field with Case Study Participants.....	126
Figure 2	Demographic Profiles.....	129
Figure 3	Original CLC Cadre Assignments.....	132
Figure 4	Adjusted CLC Cadre Assignments.....	141
Figure 5	Extended Professional Development Opportunities.....	142
Figure 6	Sample Participants' Reflection Journal.....	150
Figure 7	Heuristic for Emergent Themes to Support Assertion One.....	162
Figure 8	Heuristic for Emergent Themes to Support Assertion Two.....	310

## Chapter 1

Across the United States, the need to reform secondary schools has been on the radar screen of politicians, educators, and the public for the last several decades. One particular area of concern has been the need to reform literacy instruction. In part, the call for literacy reform is due to the large number of adolescents scoring in the below proficient reading achievement category of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2009). Increases in adolescents' achievement levels have remained stagnant for over forty years. This problem along with increased accountability efforts (NCLB, 2001) has motivated policy makers, educators and the public to shine a spotlight on adolescent literacy reform (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). However, in the past the outcry to make "every teacher a teacher of reading" (Barry, 1994; Betts, 1939; Moore, Readence, & Rickelman, 1983) has fallen on deaf ears, especially when it comes to content area teachers who work with middle and high school students. The impact on student achievement of a new and popular form of professional development, literacy coaching, is not yet proven (Neufeld & Roper, 2003a). However, teacher' sense of efficacy has been connected to a variety of teacher and student practices, including student reading achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). In addition, coaching has been linked to increases in teacher efficacy (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Henson, 2001; Ross, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). It is hoped that literacy coaching will be successful, as other professional development efforts were not, in changing content area teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy teaching such that it

leads to effective practices that result in much needed support for struggling adolescents.

This study focused on changes to three content area teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching as part of a collaborative literacy coaching (CLC) initiative as well as understanding what aspects of the coaching initiative had the most impact on the teachers' sense of efficacy. The study utilized qualitative research methodology within a larger constructivist theoretical framework (Creswell, 2003). Specifically, it was an emic, descriptive, multicase study with a psychological disciplinary orientation designed to understand the impact of the CLC initiative through the perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 2001). A variety of data allowed three middle and high school teachers to describe in their own words how the CLC initiative impacted their sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Data sources included but were not limited to transcripts of weekly collaborative literacy coaching cadres, individual teacher interviews, and initial and follow-up questionnaires.

The context of this study was defined by the CLC initiative that was implemented over nine months in a rural, midwestern, public school district. The initiative was designed to encourage teacher study and reflection in order to enhance or change their existing literacy beliefs and practices, particularly their sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. It aimed to empower the teachers to examine new beliefs, ideas, and practices as well as understand and value their own expertise and the expertise of others as part of a collaborative group.

The CLC initiative was designed and implemented by me and was informed by the Reading Instruction Study (RIS) and components of its professional development process (Richardson, 1994a), Boston Public School's Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) initiative (Neufeld & Roper, 2002, 2003b), and South Carolina's Reading Initiative (Stephens, Morgan, Donnelly, DeFord, Young, Seaman, et al., 2007). It consisted of one required component and three optional components. The required component was participation in one of four literacy coaching cadres that occurred weekly for three hours during the school day over a period of nine months and consisted of an ongoing cycle of (a) reflection and inquiry, (b) classroom experience, (c) feedback, and (d) theory and content knowledge-building. The optional components included: (a) after school study group, (b) one-on-one coaching, and (c) extended professional development opportunities. The study group component was part of the initiative's original design and occurred outside of the school day, whereas, the other two optional components grew out of changes to the initiative's flexible design driven by participants' needs and desires, took place during the school day, and either required substitute teacher coverage or use of teachers' planning periods. The CLC initiative is explained in more detail in Chapter Three.

Many definitions for a literacy coach and literacy coaching exist. For purposes of the present study, the definitions used were influenced by several within the existing professional literature (Bean & Eisenberg, 2009; IRA, 2006; IRA, 2007; Killion, 2009; Toll, 2005, 2009). However, the sum of which shaped the following definitions with attention to fitting with the CLC's design and purpose. In

general, this study was concerned with *coaching* as it pertained to providing professional development to adults and used the title *literacy coach* to define a reading specialist who performed the roles and responsibilities of a type of coach interested in the improvement of students' reading and writing skills. More specifically, the present study utilized a type of literacy coaching designed for working with groups of teachers in which the literacy coach served as a co-learner, rather than expert, who facilitated a collaborative process; the goal of which was twofold—for teachers to become more reflective and empowered around their literacy teaching and students' literacy learning.

### **Rationale for the Study**

A hole in the professional development research exists in the area of secondary literacy coaching. So much more needs to be explored in order to learn about the effectiveness of this fast-growing literacy professional development on teachers' knowledge, beliefs, practices, and student achievement. This study contributed to the literature on middle and high school literacy coaching and its impact on content area teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy instruction. There is a definite need to know more about both of these areas. First, too many adolescents struggle to comprehend subject matter text. Second, we have known for decades that comprehension strategies positively impact student learning and are best infused within content classes. Yet, teachers have resisted this charge for over a century (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995). Historically, teachers have identified beliefs, including lack of confidence for literacy teaching, as contributing to their resistance to implementing content literacy (Barry, 2002; Gee & Forester, 1988;



Hall, 2005 Spor & Schneider, 1999). More recently, teachers have stated they value literacy and are willing to implement it into their classrooms, but they have identified a lack of efficacy for literacy teaching as a barrier (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Hall, 2005). Third, literacy coaching is a popular professional development “intervention” that offers hope for addressing teachers’ resistance and lack of preparation for content literacy by providing them with support to implement literacy strategies, which can translate into much needed help for struggling adolescents (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Kamil, 2003; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999; NCTE, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003a; Schen, Rao, & Dobles, 2005; Sturtevant, 2003). However, not nearly enough research has been conducted to say definitively whether or not it is worth the time and money being used to implement it, or if it will live up to its promise to raise students’ achievement. Finally, teacher’s beliefs are key to the successful implementation of any instructional change (Guskey, 1988). This is especially true when it comes to secondary content teachers’ personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching, the focus of the present study (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass-Gould, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Since teachers’ sense of efficacy has been associated with student achievement, it is important for more studies to explore the relationship between the construct of efficacy and literacy coaching in order to understand how literacy coaching can successfully overcome teachers’ resistance and lack of efficacy for literacy teaching (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Henson, 2001; Ross, 1992).

Historically, secondary teachers have resisted the cry to become “teachers of reading” (Barry, 1994; Betts, 1939; Moore et al., 1983). They do not feel adequately prepared to support instruction in the area of reading, nor do they feel that it is their role (Barry, 2002; Gee & Forester, 1988; O’Brien et al., 1995; Spor & Schneider, 1999). Even evidence of recent changes in teachers’ beliefs about literacy instruction indicated that teachers lack confidence for literacy teaching within their content areas (Hall, 2005). Therefore, it is important for more studies, such as this one, to gather data in order to provide insight into secondary literacy coaching and its impact on secondary teachers’ personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Literacy coaching is a relatively new form of professional development and the existing research is limited, especially in the area of middle and high school coaching. According to several professional and policy groups, this emerging form of professional development has the potential to positively impact teachers’ literacy practices as it possesses the key components of effective professional development such as it is ongoing, embedded in teachers’ classroom work, targeted to specific content areas and/or grade levels, and focused on research supported best practices (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Literacy coaching can serve as a powerful defense against our nation’s “adolescent literacy crisis” through commitment to the theory that improved teaching leads to improved student learning (Neufeld & Roper, 2003a). Given the power of teachers’ beliefs within instructional change efforts (Guskey, 1988), the

awareness that teacher efficacy is associated with effective practices that can lead to student achievement (Berman et al., 1977; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), and the fact that teachers' beliefs, including their lack of confidence in literacy teaching, have been identified as barriers to past content literacy implementation efforts (Barry, 2002; Gee & Forester, 1988; Hall, 2005; O'Brien et al., 1995; Spor & Schneider, 1999), current research, should seek to listen, understand, and learn more about teacher efficacy as it relates to literacy coaching through the perspectives of teachers.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of literacy coaching on middle and high school teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching in a rural school district. This study sought to understand changes middle and high school teachers experienced through their perspectives by utilizing qualitative research methodology. This study is significant because a void in the research exists in the areas of middle and high literacy coaching and middle and high school content teachers' efficacy.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do middle and high school content teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching change as a result of participation in a nine month collaborative literacy coaching initiative, and if so how?

2. What aspects of this nine month collaborative literacy coaching initiative contributed to middle and high school content teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in both constructivist and socio-cultural theory. These two connected theories provide a framework through which to understand literacy teaching, literacy coaching, and teacher efficacy beliefs.

Constructivist theory, or more specifically, social constructivism is commonly associated with the work of Vygotsky (1978) and grew out of the work of Piaget (1959). Vygotsky recognized that learning is a complex cognitive process, is dependent on both social interaction and cultural context, and takes place within what he referred to as one's *zone of proximal development*. In other words, constructivist learning is based on the belief that knowledge is not directly transmitted from one person to another. Rather, the learner actively constructs it within a cultural context.

Separate, but related, socio-cultural theory is also associated with the work of Vygotsky and serves as a broad umbrella term that is affiliated with other social theories such as social practice and activity theory. It focuses on social interaction among and between people as a primary source of knowledge that cannot be gained in isolation from other people (Howe & Stubbs, 1996). In addition, this theory purports that knowledge is bound to specific contexts of social practice and it is always embedded in a socio-cultural context shared with a group or community.

Thus, a socio-cultural perspective suggests that construction of knowledge, beliefs, and practices are socially and culturally situated.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms used in the present study are defined alphabetically:

**Adolescent learners.** Use of this term throughout the present study respects the fact that students within Grades 6-12 are diverse and complex, and, therefore, deserve diverse and complex education/instruction. Adolescent learners are defined not only by their age, grade-level designation, and *literacy* needs (content instruction, critical reading, and critical literacy practices), but also by their comfort and expertise with “new literacies” such as computer-mediated technology (Bean & Harper, 2009; Harper & Bean, 2006; O’Brien, 2006; Salinger, 2007).

**Collaborative literacy coaching (CLC) initiative.** Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) is the name of the yearlong professional development initiative and specific type of literacy coaching I designed and facilitated. The initiative was informed by the Reading Instruction Study (RIS) and components of its professional development process (Richardson, 1994a), Boston Public School’s Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) initiative (Neufeld & Roper, 2002, 2003b), and the South Carolina Reading Initiative (SCRI) (Stephens et al., 2007). The CCL initiative utilized a type of literacy coaching designed for working with groups of teachers in which the literacy coach facilitated a collaborative process and served as a co-learner, rather than expert (Richardson, 1994a). The goal of the process was to support teachers in becoming more reflective and empowered around their literacy teaching and students’ literacy learning. The CLC initiative consisted of one

required component (weekly CLC cadre meetings) and three optional components (one-on-one literacy coaching, after school study group, and extended professional development opportunities, also referred to as “field trips”). The study references the yearlong process as the CLC initiative, the type of coaching utilized as CLC, and weekly collaborative coaching meetings as CLC cadres.

**Content areas.** The term *content areas* is used throughout the present study. It refers primarily to core subject area courses, but is not limited to English/language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics. In addition, the term is used to describe teachers who teach these subject areas by addressing them as *content area teachers*.

**General sense of teacher efficacy (GTE).** GTE refers to one’s belief that teachers, in general, should and can influence student learning, regardless of a variety of challenges (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

**Literacy.** For purposes of the present study the term *literacy* is broadly defined to include both traditional literacies (i.e., comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and writing) and “new literacies” (i.e., media, internet, visual, global, out-of-school, and critical) of primary concern and interest to *adolescent learners* (see definition).

**Literacy coach and literacy coaching.** Many definitions for a literacy coach and literacy coaching exist. For purposes of the present study, the definitions used were influenced by several found within the existing professional literature (Bean & Eisenberg, 2009; IRA, 2006; IRA, 2007; Killion, 2009; Toll, 2005, 2009). However, the sum of these definitions shaped the following definitions with attention to fitting

with the *Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) Initiative's* (see definition) design and purpose. In general, this study was concerned with *literacy coaching* as it pertained to providing *literacy teaching* (see definition) professional development to adults and used the title *literacy coach* to define a reading specialist who performed the roles and responsibilities of a type of coach interested in the improvement of students' reading and writing skills. More specifically, the present study utilized a type of *literacy coaching* designed for working with groups of teachers in which the *literacy coach* served as a co-learner, rather than expert, who facilitated a collaborative process (see definition for *Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) Initiative*).

**Literacy teaching.** Many names exist that address *literacy teaching* within middle and high school *content areas* (see definition). For example, secondary reading, content reading, content literacy, and adolescent literacy are used in the professional literature and at times interchangeably. Literacy teaching is used in the present study to reference the infusion of *literacy* strategies, practices, techniques, and more within various *content areas* as determined by individual participant's and their students' interests and needs.

**Personal sense of teacher efficacy (PTE).** PTE refers to a teacher's feelings of competence and the extent to which he/she has the ability to personally impact student learning (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998).

**Secondary.** The present study involves teachers working in a middle school (Grades 6-8) and a high school (Grades 9-12). Therefore, the term *secondary* is used interchangeably with *middle and high school(s)* to reference teachers, *adolescent*

*learners* (see definition), *content areas* (see definition), and school settings within Grades 6-12.

**Teachers' sense of efficacy (TE).** Teachers' sense of efficacy, also referred to as teacher efficacy, is a construct of teacher beliefs and has been linked to teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). It is a future-oriented belief about an individual's level of confidence in a given situation. I adapted the definition of TE put forth by Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998), which is twofold. The researchers posit that efficacy beliefs consist of teachers' perceptions of their capability to enact certain pedagogical practices, and their beliefs that these actions can bring about student learning. More specifically, they define TE as a "teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (p. 233). In the present study, I use the term TE more broadly to reference both *personal sense of teacher efficacy (PTE)* (see definition) and *general sense of teacher efficacy (GTE)* (see definition).

## **Dissertation Outline**

In Chapter One, I provided an introduction to the present study that included an overview, rationale, statement of the problem, purpose, and definitions of key terms. It is intended to serve as a frame for the following chapters.

In Chapter Two, I consider research relevant to the present study: (a) literacy teaching, (b) teachers' efficacy beliefs, and (c) literacy coaching. The first section explores aspects of literacy teaching as it relates to middle and high content area teachers and adolescent learners' success. The second section reviews the



research on middle and high school teachers' beliefs, particularly their efficacy beliefs and how these beliefs relate to student achievement, literacy teaching, and teacher change. The final section addresses how literacy coaching, a mode of professional development, impacts teachers' beliefs, practices, and student achievement.

Chapter Three describes the methodology used in this study, including information on (a) qualitative and case study methodology, (b) selection and introduction of participants, (c) context of the study, (d) data collection methods, (e) methods of data analysis, and (f) validity, trustworthiness and limitations.

Chapter Four presents my case study data and analysis. First, I make assertions for each of my research questions based on common themes that emerged from the data. Next, I include an introduction to each participant before describing and discussing how each individual's words and actions uniquely support the common themes. Then, I discuss the common themes across the cases. Finally, I summarize the assertions, case findings and discussions.

Chapter Five is the conclusion. In this chapter, I draw conclusions, make links between previous research and my findings, critique the study, and suggest implications for the field and future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

My dissertation study examined changes in teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching. They participated in a collaborative literacy coaching (CLC) initiative of nine months duration in a rural, Midwestern, public school district. The CLC initiative was designed to encourage teacher reflection and empower middle and high school content area teachers' literacy teaching and their students' literacy learning. The study utilized emic qualitative research methodology in order to understand the impact, through the perspectives of the participants in a descriptive, multicase study.

I argued in Chapter One that researchers need to know more about the impact of literacy coaching on teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Research in this area should be conducted to learn more about this popular and growing form of professional development and its power to change teachers' sense of efficacy (Cantrell & Callaway, 2008; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). Teachers' sense of efficacy is considered the greatest predictor of teachers' willingness to make changes as part of professional development initiatives, and it has been linked to numerous teacher and student behaviors, including teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement (Guskey, 1988; Henson, 2001; Ross, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Additionally, teachers have resisted implementing content literacy for decades, citing a variety of beliefs, including their lack of confidence for literacy teaching, as among many reasons for not incorporating it in their classes (Barry, 2002; Gee & Forester, 1988; Greenleaf, Schoenback, Cziko, &

Mueller, 2001; Hall, 2005; Mallette, Henk, Waggoner, & DeLaney, 2005; O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995; Park & Osborne, 2007; Spor & Schneider, 1999). Not enough is known about the development of teachers' efficacy beliefs, especially how they relate to literacy teaching and teacher change through professional development efforts such as literacy coaching (Henson, 2001; Ross, 1992; Takahashi, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Full implementation of content literacy is needed so that the nation's "adolescent literacy crisis," defined as a disproportionate number of low performing adolescents, can be reversed, eventually eliminated, and the literacy needs of all adolescents met. Providing teachers with ongoing, job-embedded support, such as literacy coaching, is one way to increase their teaching efficacy for literacy teaching and help ensure full implementation of content literacy at the middle and high school levels.

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a theoretical framework and research base for the present study. In the literature review, I considered research relevant to the present study: (a) literacy teaching, (b) teachers' efficacy beliefs, and (c) literacy coaching. The first section explores aspects of literacy teaching as it relates to middle and high content area teachers and adolescent learners' success. The second section reviews the research on middle and high school teachers' beliefs, particularly their efficacy beliefs and how they relate to student achievement, literacy teaching, and teacher change. The final section addresses how literacy coaching, a mode of professional development, impacts teachers' beliefs, practices, and student achievement. I begin my review in the following section with a discussion of literacy teaching at the middle and high school levels.

### **Literacy Teaching**

Literacy teaching within middle and high school content areas has a long history. Many names exist (i.e., secondary reading, content reading, content literacy, adolescent literacy), and at times they are used interchangeably in the professional literature. It is important to consider the research in order to gain an understanding of the contemporary view of literacy teaching in middle and high school content areas as well as to know the perspective that informed my approach to literacy coaching within the CLC initiative.

Richard Vacca's (1998) statement, "I . . . wonder whether there is a political and public mindset that literacy learning is critical only in early childhood. The faulty and misguided assumption, 'If young children learn to read early on, they will read to learn throughout their lives,' results in more harm than good" (p. 606). He emphasized what he called a "benign neglect" of addressing the literacy needs of adolescent learners. Although Vacca spoke these words 23 years ago has anything changed? NAEP reading scores for high school students have remained stagnant for over forty years, and recent results for twelfth grade students indicate a significant decline in reading achievement (RAND, 2002, p. 5). A look at a contemporary view of literacy teaching of middle and high school students, and its definition helps explain how this particular group of students and their needs are equally as complex as the process of reading.

Not until the late 1990s when several research studies and the Adolescent Literacy Commission's position statement (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999) on adolescent literacy called for change did the field shift its thinking about the role of the adolescent within literacy (Bean & Harper, 2009). Conley, Freidhoff, Gritter, and Van Duinen (2008) noted that renaming the field "adolescent literacy" caused a change from historically strategies-oriented "content literacy" to a more student-focused "adolescent

literacy” (p. 97). The field of adolescent literacy was developed and formalized as a result of IRA’s commission. Adolescent Literacy “subsumed” the categories of content literacy and secondary reading (Bean & Harper, 2009; Vacca, 1998). Interest in reading skills of adolescents dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and research on content area reading dates back to the 1970s (Bean & Harper, 2009). Following the Commission on Adolescent Literacy, rather than view the adolescent as an outsider looking in at texts armed with strategies to access print, researchers realized that the reader should be at the center of literacy processes and practices, and they recognized that the reader, context, and text all create meaning together (Stevens, 2002). According to Stevens, the shift from labeling the field “content reading” to “secondary reading” to “content literacy” to “adolescent literacy” opened the door to full consideration of what the term adolescent literacy implies that content literacy does not.

Studies and discussions around adolescent literacy revealed that the shift in terminology was representative of a range of complex issues and themes. For example, Harper and Bean (2006) pointed out that Lesko (2001) challenged the existing view of adolescents as “biologically driven bundles of ‘raging hormones’” (pp. 152-153) and suggested they are instead complex and diverse youth who are “young and old, learning and learned, working and in school” (p. 153). Harper and Bean (2007) noted that compared to previous generations, today’s adolescents are showing “greater complexity, intensity, and diversity in their literacy practices” (p. 327). Additionally, they pointed to work by O’Brien (2006) to support the statement that “despite efforts to narrow the scope of literacy through standardized testing, adolescents are diverse and complex” (Harper & Bean, 2007, p. 327) and, therefore, require diverse and complex education/instruction.

Furthermore, Salinger (2007) argued that defining adolescence by age and number of years in school was problematic, especially since middle and high schools are configured in so many different ways (i.e. 6-12, 5-8, 9-12, etc.). He quoted Alexander's observation that "literacy evolves and matures over time in ways that are not governed by grade-level designations" (p. 7). Bean and Harper (2009) also pointed to problems with defining adolescents by age. They noted that the professional literature defines adolescents by literacy needs, not age. According to them, the literature mentions two types of adolescent literacy needs: (a) for more advanced instruction because of increased literacy demands of today's technical world, and (b) for basic literacy instruction.

The researchers concurred that the complex literacy needs of adolescents require content instruction, critical reading, and critical literacy practices. Additionally, they noted that lack of basic literacy skills, that is defining adolescents according to deficiencies, results in thinking of adolescents as illiterates, alliterates, struggling or striving readers.

Alvermann was among a group of adolescent literacy researchers who asked educators and the public to "meet the needs of marginalized readers in new times" (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000, p. 5). Not only did Alvermann suggest we look at the role of the struggling students' reading identities in order to inform future work with them, she also addressed the role of adolescents and their multiple literacies on comprehension instruction. She addressed its significance in terms of teaching students to read critically, planning appropriate instruction for English Learners, working with readers who struggle, and motivating adolescents to want to read (Alvermann & Eakle,

2003). All of this introduced the need to more fully understand multiple literacies, aliteracy, literate identities, and critical literacy.

Given statistics such as “more than 5 million high school students do not read well enough to understand their textbooks or other material written for their grade level” and “26% of these students cannot read material that many of us would deem essential for daily living, such as road signs, newspapers, and bus schedules” (Hock & Deshler, 2003, p. 50), one might wonder why so many adolescents are illiterate? However, as Moore and Hinchman (2003) suggested, “literacy is multidimensional” whose meaning “does not lie on one scale” (pp. 13-14), making it far more useful to consider adolescents’ abilities in terms of basic literacy, aliteracy, and multiple literacies. Additionally, as the *RAND Reading Study Group* (2002) findings on comprehension assessment stated, given the poor measurement that currently exists, measurements inconsistent with the current theory of reading comprehension, we really do not know how bad the problem is in regards to reading comprehension.

According to Moore and Hinchman (2003), recent NAEP results showed that the majority of adolescents have mastered basic reading skills, but far fewer were successful when it came to comprehending more advanced reading materials. They noted being of equal concern, the large numbers of adolescents who choose not to read. This was referred to as *aliteracy*, or the unwillingness to read versus the inability to read. In recognition of this growing phenomenon among adolescent readers, the International Reading Association’s Commission on Adolescent Literacy issued a position statement on adolescent literacy in which one of the stated reading rights of adolescent learners was

that they “deserve access to a wide variety of reading materials [so] that they can and want to read” (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999, p. 4).

Current research and government initiatives are focused on concern for struggling readers (Bean & Harper, 2009). However, according to Bean and Harper, struggling readers do not adequately capture an adolescent’s literacy capacity. The researchers noted that not all adolescents struggle in all areas and with all types of tasks. This is especially true when both in-school and out-of-school literacies are considered. Researchers agree that adolescents are complex and diverse. Research found that students will take actions to protect their identities as learners (Hall, 2007). For example, Hall noted that students found ways around teacher-led strategy instruction and participated in class discussions in order to avoid appearing to be struggling learners. Bean and Harper (2009) suggested we find ways that do not marginalize struggling readers and noted a whole school literacy initiative designed by Fisher and Ivey (2006) as a good example of what is needed.

Adolescents should not only be defined by their literacy needs, instead the defining should be by their comfort and expertise with new literacies such as computer-mediated technology. Moorman and Horton (2007) stated that to be today’s adolescent is to be a “native” user, rather than an adult “immigrant” user of technology (p. 268). According to Bean and Harper (2009), students born from 1982 to present have never known a world without computers, cell phones and other forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs). They also noted that this generation of adolescents reads and writes more than any previous generation. Their out-of-school competencies are not always acknowledged or used in classrooms such as their use of weblogs, text



messaging, or playing video games (Bean & Harper, 2009). Therefore, the researchers concluded that taking a strictly cognitive or in-school stance toward understanding struggling readers might be seriously limiting.

Moje, Young, Readence, and Moore (2000) suggested four possible themes for future research on adolescent literacy. They included adolescents' multiple literacies, multiple texts and the expanded notions of text, literate identities, and space for exploring multiple literacies within school. Multiple literacies recognize "inside and outside of school" learning from a variety of texts as well as the notion of what text is such as "film, CD-ROM, the Internet, popular music, television, magazines, and newspapers, to name a few" (p. 6). Literate identities go beyond attitude, interest, and motivation to read (Moore, 2002). He noted that adolescents with productive literate identities "consider themselves insiders amid a fellowship of readers and writers" and are not only "motivated to achieve academically," but "believe in self-efficacy, thinking that they are responsible for and in control of improving their literacy learning" (p. 149). According to Moore, attention to shaping and supporting the formation of literate identities of adolescents results in the creation of "community and agency" (p. 149).

Critical literacy "refers to an explicit awareness that the language of texts and readers' responses to texts are ideologically charged" (Moje, et al., 2000, p. 11). Hagood (2002) further explained "Literacies—such as hardcore grunge music, fashion magazines, or news media for that matter—depict particular versions of the world and particular realities that may be read as problematic and dangerous because readers often unquestionably use texts to learn about the world and about themselves" (p. 248). Therefore, the need arises within adolescent literacy to teach critical literacy so that

readers learn to question texts and understand how the various texts they read can present skewed versions or selective perspectives of the world, gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and more (Moje, et al, 2000; Hagood, 2002).

One thing is certain, the labels attached to both the adolescent and related fields of study are many, but continue over time to evolve in positive ways. From “retarded” to “remedial” to “struggling” to “adolescent” to “striving” reader and from “remedial reading” to “secondary reading” to “content literacy” and to “adolescent literacy,” the labels continue to change and more accurately reflect the complexity of the learner and the area of study at hand. However, we still have a long way to go before we give equal attention to adolescent learners, rather than an over-emphasis on those who cannot read well to a hard look at the complex needs of those learners who can. Recent areas of research interest (multiple literacy, literate identities, and critical literacy) are pointing us in a direction that can lead to a more equal emphasis for all adolescent learners. When such a balance is achieved, the field will truly be on its way to “re/mediating adolescent literacies” (Luke & Elkins, 2000, p. 1).

### **Comprehension research and literacy teaching.**

Comprehension is considered the “the point” of reading and comprehension strategy instruction is considered an essential component of literacy teaching. According to the research, adolescents need to learn and use comprehension strategies and teachers need regularly to teach them. Therefore, the following informed my perspective, and an overview was considered important information to share during the CLC initiative.

According to Duke and Pearson (2002), “Most of what we know about reading comprehension has been learned since 1975” (p. 205). There are a variety of possible

reasons for the lateness of our comprehension knowledge. The most important reason being that the definition of reading comprehension underwent a significant change in the 1970s, contributions to the field from cognitive psychologists made the change possible. As a result, beliefs associated with what it means to read and a subsequent new research focus intended to better understand reading as a process led to a steady explosion of new information about comprehension over the following three decades and continues today.

Prior to the 1970s, reading was considered to be a linear/sequential task consisting of a set of skills. Comprehension was considered to be an end product measured by what the reader recalled from the text. Cognitive psychologists' discovery of schema theory (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Bartlett, 1932; Piaget, 1985) and Louise Rosenblatt's Reader-Response Theory (1978) (interaction between the reader, the author and the text) contributed to a major shift in thinking about reading comprehension. It is now known to be an active process versus a result of decoding words. Both theories introduced the importance of prior knowledge and the readers' greater involvement than previously thought in both bringing information to the text and taking it away from the words on the page. Both the cognitive psychologists' and Rosenblatt's work led to a steady, and recent, progression of new research and information about reading comprehension.

Prior to 1975, reading comprehension was understood through the lens of early and mid-twentieth century behaviorist ideas about learning. It was believed that comprehension consisted of mastering a set of discrete skills such as identifying the main idea and drawing conclusions in an effort to achieve mastery (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). Once these skills were mastered, then the reader was considered a good

comprehender. Basal reader series and curriculum scope and sequence guides were built upon the idea that comprehension consisted of an ordered set of subskills.

During the mid 1970s in an effort to better understand comprehension, researchers articulated a schema theory and placed a new emphasis on the reader's prior knowledge. Anderson and Pearson (1984) discussed how readers act as a "filter," and text runs through what they already know as part of a process of constructing meaning. Schema theory introduced the idea that all new information or text attaches itself to or alters the reader's existing knowledge base. Therefore, during this time, what a reader already knows (prior knowledge) was considered the biggest factor in comprehension.

This led to researchers' efforts to better understand the reader, especially good readers, during the 1980s, and they attempted to assess ways to help those struggling with comprehension. They concluded that good readers use strategies, which change according to the demands of the text and their purposes. Paris, Lipson, and Wixson (1994) determined that the biggest difference between expert and struggling readers was that the former mastered strategic reading comprehension behaviors.

From the 1990s to the present, researchers built on the "good reader" research and developed a more sophisticated understanding of cognitive strategies. They reached a consensus during the 90s that there are multiple strategies that have proven effective to improve students' comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002). These strategies are consistent with our contemporary view of reading, align with good reader research, and can be taught.

Strategies to improve comprehension can be taught individually or as part of a package. There are debates within the field concerning which is the better method. In

their practitioner-friendly book, *Mosaic of Thought*, Keene and Zimmerman (1997) helped to popularize strategy instruction, known amongst researchers for years, but it has not made its way into most classrooms. They suggested that strategies should be taught one at a time. The authors believe that a one-at-a-time approach allows students more time to process and practice them. However, others suggested that it is better to teach students to use strategy “routines” or “packages” (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2002).

Research reports such as NRP (2000) and RAND (2002), referred to as the RAND Report, looked to a review of the research in support of comprehension strategies. The RAND Report borrowed from and built upon Rosenblatt’s theory to define reading as an active and constructivist process. It described literacy as a lifelong pursuit, comprehension as the point of reading, and the framework in which comprehension takes place as including the reader, the text, and the activity, all three occur within a larger sociocultural context. Reading is a “simultaneous process” in which the reader “constructs” and “extracts” meaning by engaging with the text and bringing new meaning to the text. The RAND Report’s definition of comprehension pointed out that the text is an important factor in reading comprehension, but it was not sufficient in and of itself.

Regardless of how strong the converging evidence is in favor of comprehension strategies, whether taught individually or together, the reality is that there is little evidence to show that teachers actually teach them (Pressley, 2002). Durkin’s 1978 study determined that only 2% of all class time was spent on comprehension instruction. Rather than teach students how to comprehend, Durkin witnessed teachers “assigning” and then “assessing” students’ ability to comprehend. What is even more disappointing

is that more recently Duke (2000), Pressley (2000) and others have determined that not much has changed in regards to comprehension instruction and putting to use the research-based comprehension strategies. Standing in the way of realizing adolescents' literacies, including infusion of comprehension strategies within subject areas, are teacher beliefs. The last century can be characterized by teachers' resistance of literacy teaching at middle and high school levels.

### **Resistance to literacy teaching.**

Researchers spent much of the 80s and 90s studying teachers' resistance to content reading. However, since the early 1900s, teachers have been resisting infusing literacy strategies into their content areas. A review of the literature revealed that early studies on content reading focused on the use of reading and textbooks in content classrooms (Smith & Feathers, 1983) and why teachers were resistant (O'Brien, 1988).

Researchers have sought to understand why, despite decades of support for use of literacy strategies across subject areas, pre-service teachers resisted content reading (Moore, et al., 1983). Various researchers have synthesized the reasons behind pre-service teachers' resistance (Bean & Zulich, 1990, 1992; Hall, 2005; O'Brien & Stewart, 1990; Risko, et al., 2008; Stewart & O'Brien, 1989). Likewise, researchers have documented secondary inservice teachers' resistance to content reading for decades (Smith & Feathers, 1983; Ratekin, Simpson, Alvermann & Dishner, 1985; O'Brien et al., 1995).

As a result of these many studies, reviews, and questionnaires, researchers had a clearer picture of the secondary school setting. In an effort to address teacher resistance

they wished to better understand the context, including content teachers' beliefs as they related to their instructional practices.

Therefore in time, rather than just focus on preservice teachers' through attention to content reading courses and field experiences, researchers recognized the need to learn more about resistance by studying inservice teachers, including their perspectives and voices about instruction that previously had been ignored (Sturtevant, 1996b). Studies in the 1990s focused on what influences secondary instruction, including the sociocultural context of school and classrooms, teachers' beliefs, and teachers' decision-making processes (Sturtevant & Linek, 2003).

Sturtevant (1996a, 1996b), together with her colleagues (Sturtevant, Duling, & Hall, 2001), studied social studies, science, and mathematics teachers, from a sociocultural perspective (Dillon, O'Brien, Moje, & Stewart, 1994; Moje, 1996). Findings included a wide range of in- and out-of-school factors that both positively and negatively influenced teachers' literacy practices and beliefs. These included personal histories and philosophies about learning, teaching, and instruction for specific subjects; student discipline and behavior; colleagues, role models, and other teacher-friends; time, curriculum, and administrative policies (Dillion, et al., 1994; Moje, 1996; Sturtevant, 1996a, 1996b; Sturtevant, Duling, & Hall, 2001). This line of research sought to know more about how instructional decisions were made within the context of secondary schools and classrooms in order to better understand why promising instructional practices were not used.

In the late 1990's when the field changed terminology and made the shift from secondary or content reading to adolescent literacy, the focus of research also changed

(Mallette, Henk, Waggoner, & DeLaney, 2005). Its new concentration included: (a) social and political nature of adolescent literacy, (b) secondary teachers' beliefs about the meaning of traditional literacies, and (c) secondary teachers and administrators beliefs and values about literacy instruction from a newer/broader reconceptualization of adolescent literacy (Mallette et al., 2005).

Other researchers surveyed content reading strategy use (Barry, 2002; Spor & Schneider, 1999). Spor and Schneider (1999) focused on 435 K-12 teachers, 55% of the respondents were teachers in grades 7-12. The results indicated that teachers were comfortable with their own content knowledge and open to using reading strategies. However, fewer than half were familiar with the identified strategies and those who were indicated that they did not use them.

Barry (2002) examined strategies that secondary inservice teachers reported using one to twelve years following the completion of a required content reading course. Of the 550 surveyed, 123 responses were usable and all who were in teaching positions reported using at least some of them. Barriers to their implementation included lack of time, pressure to cover content, lack of motivation, lack of in-depth knowledge, and lack of confidence.

According to Hall (2005), required course work was the field's primary response to preservice and inservice teachers' resistance to content reading. Aware of barriers to implementation, courses were designed to improve pre/inservice teachers' attitudes about content literacy and support implementation. In addition to university courses, professional development was designed to address inservice teachers' resistance and to support implementation of content literacy strategies.



Early professional development around content literacy implementation wished to change teachers' attitudes (Dupuis, Askov, & Lee, 1979; Hall, 2005; Wedman & Robinson, 1988). Successful professional development models de-emphasized teacher-centered approaches and utilized collaborative approaches that engaged teachers in thinking and talking about curriculum, instruction, students, and the culture of the secondary school and classroom (O'Brien, et al., 1995). Dupuis, et al. (1979) found that bi-weekly workshops and expert consultation over the course of a year changed teachers' attitudes about content literacy. Wedman and Robinson (1988) confirmed the need for extended professional development with their program designed to provide:

- concrete, teacher-specific, extended training
- opportunities for teachers to observe others
- regular meetings focused on practical problems
- active involvement in learning during professional development
- demonstrations of and feedback on classroom implementation; &
- specific knowledge regarding desirable instruction practices

(p. 65).

Soon calls came for professional development to go beyond changing content teachers' beliefs and attitudes about content literacy and successfully show them how to implement literacy into content instruction (Hall, 2005). Although efforts were successful in changing beliefs and attitudes, little evidence existed that teachers' knowledge of content literacy transferred into use in the classroom. Criticism continues to exist that researchers have not helped teachers understand their role as teachers of

reading. One way researchers have not helped teachers is by treating content literacy as a general, rather than a content specific task (Fisher & Frey, 2008).

Teachers need to approach content literacy within the context of their specific subject matter (Hall, 2005; Moje, 2008). The challenge is for teachers to help students develop the sophisticated skills needed to read texts specific to their content areas (Moje, 2008). For example, in social studies, students need to be able to identify historical biases and separate facts from persuasive arguments (Hall, 2005; Moje, 2008). In science, students need to be able to identify facts, laws and principles as well as understand the difference between fact and theory (Hall, 2005; Moje, 2008). A content teacher's role is different from a reading teacher's or a reading specialist's. In order for content teachers to understand their unique role, professional development must go beyond changing their beliefs and attitudes and focus on infusing content literacy into individual subject areas (Hall, 2005).

Researchers noted that change in teacher practices requires professional development. It must allow new teaching techniques to be extensively modeled and demonstrated (Anders & Levine, 1990; Guskey, 1986). Additionally, Anders and Levine stated that teachers needed to have opportunities to experience, apply, and critique new practices. Guskey's (1986) research on professional development and transfer of new knowledge found that teachers needed extensive, varied, and ongoing opportunities in order for instructional strategies to succeed in their classrooms. Recent professional development efforts for secondary content teachers, designed with these principles in mind, show promising results (Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009). Study results show that teachers valued literacy instruction, saw themselves as both literacy and content

teachers, and though they encountered barriers trying to implement new strategies, they felt that professional development with coaching and collaboration supported their teaching efficacy and implementation efforts (Cantrell, et al., 2009).

A look at recent studies related to teacher resistance revealed teacher efficacy is important. Studies noted that teachers see value in literacy instruction and perceive a heavy responsibility to teach literacy within their content, but they do not feel equipped to do so (Hall, 2005; Greenleaf, et al., 2001; Mallette, et al., 2005; Park & Osborne, 2007). According to Hall (2005), preservice teachers expressed more resistance than inservice teachers to teaching literacy within their content. Inservice teachers expressed value in content literacy. However, inservice teachers had a higher level of efficacy in their subject area, but not so in literacy. Park and Osborne (2007) conducted a national survey of 216 agriscience teachers on their attitudes and practices related to reading. The survey found that teachers had positive attitudes about reading and reading instruction, but that they lacked adequate knowledge and confidence to promote more frequent use.

In addition to efficacy issues, another recent survey uncovered a different factor responsible for implementing content literacy instruction. Mallette and colleagues (2005) surveyed 90 teachers in award-winning middle schools. They found that teachers both valued and placed high importance on traditional or basic literacies (ie. comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and writing), but they did not recognize or develop “new literacies” (ie. media, internet, visual, global, out-of-school, and critical literacy). Mallette and colleagues noted that teachers were receptive to the idea of everyone as a teacher of literacy. However, their beliefs about students’ multiple literacies pointed to a new form of resistance. According to the survey results, teachers resisted recognizing or

incorporating students' out-of-school literacies in their instruction and viewed students' multiple literacies as "habits in need of repair" (p. 40).

Recent professional development efforts focusing on use of new/multiple literacies are addressing this new barrier to content literacy implementation (Hagood, Provost, Skinner, & Egelson, 2008). Hagood, et al. reported on the first year of implementation efforts of new literacies strategies in middle school English and social studies classrooms. Like Mallette and colleagues (2005), they found that teachers viewed literacy in a traditional manner. Although they had trouble implementing them into their instruction, teachers expressed excitement about new literacies strategies. Unfortunately, the school's focus on preparation for state assessments was identified as a barrier to implementation efforts (Hagood, et al., 2008).

Recent research has implications for professional development for inservice and preservice teachers. It is not enough to inform educators of the value and importance of broadly defining and adolescent literacy and literacy tasks or to encourage them to incorporate literacy defined by 21<sup>st</sup> century standards (Mallette, et al., 2005). Instead, Mallette and colleagues suggested teachers' lack of knowledge, lack of confidence, and traditional beliefs about literacy must be recognized as obstacles to full implementation of content literacy. Additionally, Mallette and colleagues stressed that professional development opportunities must be created with this in mind and teachers must be provided with the support they need to increase their knowledge and confidence as they experiment with new literacies within their disciplines.

The design of the CLC initiative used within the present study allowed for participants' consideration of all aspects of teachers' resistance to literacy teaching,

including recently identified barriers such as efficacy beliefs and beliefs about traditional versus multiple literacies.

### **Teachers' Sense of Efficacy**

A review of the research concerning teacher efficacy beliefs is relevant to the present study. For several decades, researchers have recognized that teacher beliefs have a powerful impact on teaching and learning (Fenstermacher, 1978; Kagan, 1990, 1992; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Readence, Kile, & Mallette, 1998; Richardson, 1994a, 1996). Additionally, teacher efficacy is a construct of teacher beliefs and has been linked to teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Teacher efficacy plays an important role in educators' willingness to change and is a strong predictor of their change efforts within professional development initiatives (Guskey, 1988; Smylie, 1988). It is particularly important to the present study and literacy coaching of secondary content area teachers, because they have resisted literacy teaching for decades (Moore, Readence, & Rickelman, 1983; O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995). Teachers have cited beliefs, including their lack of confidence in literacy instruction, as among their reasons for not using or teaching literacy strategies (Barry, 2002; Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009; Gee & Forester, 1988; Hall, 2005; O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995; Spor & Schneider, 1999).

Furthermore, with so many diverse learners and struggling adolescent readers, more needs to be known about how professional development efforts can change secondary teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Teacher efficacy has been linked to coaching (Ross, 1992; Henson 2001; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Coaching often involves identifying and sometimes changing a range of existing beliefs,

including teacher efficacy beliefs, in order to support new practices. Recently, teacher efficacy has been linked to literacy coaching and implementation of content literacy (Cantrell & Callaway, 2008; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008).

Teacher efficacy, literacy coaching, and literacy teaching are all areas of interest in the present study. More research is needed in all three of these areas, especially at the secondary level, to better understand how coaching can support efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Supporting content teachers' efficacy beliefs is important so they feel comfortable, competent, and willing to implement literacy in their subject areas, which will in turn support adolescent learners' literacy achievement.

In the following section, I provide an overview of the construct of teacher efficacy. After introducing this important construct, I discuss the impact of professional development, including coaching, on teacher efficacy beliefs. Then, I examine existing studies related to middle and high school literacy teaching and teacher efficacy beliefs.

### **Teacher efficacy.**

Teachers' sense of efficacy, or more commonly referred to as teacher efficacy, is a construct of teacher beliefs. Specifically, it is the belief held by a teacher that he or she could positively impact student learning. This construct has been linked to numerous teacher and student behaviors (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

Teacher efficacy is a predictor of productive teaching practices such as use of praise versus use of criticism, perseverance with low achievers, being task oriented, enthusiasm and acceptance of student opinions (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). These behaviors and others positively impact student behaviors, which contribute to student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). Researchers have found that teachers who believe they

can make a difference accept responsibility for both student success and student failure (Kagan, 1992). Therefore, it is considered important primarily because it determines the amount of effort one is willing to put forth with a particular teaching task, especially when faced with challenges, motivation issues, or instructional change efforts, and it is related to student outcomes such as student efficacy beliefs, engagement, and achievement (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009).

Teacher efficacy has grown out of various theories, including frameworks formulated by Rotter (1966) and Bandura (1977). According to Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998), these two theoretical frames have guided much of the existing research on the subject of teacher efficacy. In an article intended to clarify the broad construct of teacher efficacy and its measurements and a proposal of a new model, Tschannen-Moran, et al. discussed both theories. They explained how the RAND organization was involved in a series of studies rooted in the work of Rotter and social learning theory. The first RAND study involved an analysis conducted by Armor, et al. (1979) of the school preferred reading program in minority elementary schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District. A second conducted by Berman, McLaughlin, Bass-Gould, Pauly, and Zellman (1977) investigated continuation of change implementation in federally funded projects. Researchers' ongoing interest in teacher efficacy resulted from these two studies. Armor, et al. found that it was related to changes in reading achievement among minority students. Berman, et al. identified teacher efficacy as the most important variable in change implementation.

In both RAND studies, teacher efficacy was determined by adding the scores from two statements on questionnaires given to teachers (Tschannen, et al., 1998). They included:

- (a) “When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can’t do much [because] most of a student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment,” and
- (b) “If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students” (Berman et al., 1977, pp. 136-137).

According to Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998), these questions were inspired by an article written by Rotter regarding the concept of external and internal control. The former details factors outside of a teacher’s ability to impact student learning such as a student’s home environment, motivation, or abilities. Teachers believe that they prevent their ability to be successful and positively impact student achievement. The latter are those factors that lie within the teacher’s control such as teaching activities or other professional actions, which allow them to reach struggling, challenging, or unmotivated students.

Ashton and Webb (1986) identified two dimensions of teacher efficacy based on the findings from the RAND studies questions (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). They include general and personal teacher efficacy. General teaching efficacy refers to one’s belief that teachers, in general, should and can influence student learning regardless of possible challenges such as low socio-economic status or difficult home life. Personal efficacy refers to a teacher’s feelings of competence and the extent to which he/she has the ability to personally impact student learning. They concluded that teacher efficacy is



related to student achievement. However, the two dimensions of teacher efficacy (personal and general) had different effects on different subject areas.

This led researchers to be concerned with the reliability of the RAND studies' two-item scale and prompted them to develop more comprehensive measurements (Tschannen-Moran, et al. 1998). Tschannen-Moran and colleagues reviewed three measurements that built upon Rotter's work: (a) Rose and Medway's (1981) teacher locus of control, (b) Guskey's (1981) responsibility for student achievement, and (c) Ashton, et al.'s (1982) Webb scale.

Meanwhile, Bandura (1977, 1986) approached teacher efficacy from a different perspective and he developed a theory that grew out of a social cognitive tradition. He posited that teacher efficacy is a form of self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998) and he suggested that teachers are affected by their beliefs about their potential to impact student learning and that they in turn determine the amount of effort and time they are willing to expend with tasks and challenges with students (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998).

Bandura also asserted that motivation is influenced by both outcome and efficacy expectations. Outcome expectations are one's expectations about the likely consequences of certain behavior(s), or an individual's estimate of the likely consequences of performing a given task at an expected level of competence (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). Efficacy expectations are expectations about one's abilities to influence a certain outcome, or, in other words, an individual's belief that he or she can do what it takes to perform a given task (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). It is related to the energy and effort an individual is willing to put forth with a given task. Bandura

argued that outcome expectancies have limited predictive power to efficacy measures because they originate from one's efficacy expectation or the level of competence one expects to bring to a situation (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998).

According to social cognitive theory, the choices that individuals or groups of individuals make are influenced by the strength of their efficacy beliefs (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Bandura (1986, 1997) identified four sources of influence on efficacy beliefs. They include: (a) mastery experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) social persuasion, and (d) affective state. Mastery experience is identified as the most powerful of the four. With it, efficacy increases when one's performance is successful with a given skill or task. Vicarious experience affects efficacy when someone else demonstrates a skill and performs a task well. Social persuasion involves encouragement or specific performance feedback from a colleague or supervisor. Its impact on efficacy depends upon the credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise of the person doing the persuading. Affective state increases self-efficacy through the level of arousal such as excitement or stress associated with a skill or task.

Literacy coaching has the capability to impact efficacy positively through each of the four sources of influences. Literacy coaching supports teachers as they both learn new instructional strategies and implement different instructional practices so that they can achieve mastery experience. Additionally, through literacy coaching, vicarious experience can increase efficacy as teachers' observe their coach successfully model new skills. When coaches have positive, trusting relationships with teachers, they can provide encouragement and targeted feedback to teachers as they work to learn or enhance instructional practices, which leads to increased efficacy via social persuasion. Lastly,

literacy coaches can help to create positive and productive levels of arousal associated with learning new skills that lead to increased efficacy by supporting and encouraging teachers as they try new practices. However, as noted previously according to Bandura, mastery experience is the most powerful of all four sources.

Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998) discussed measurements that grew out of Bandura's concept of self-efficacy. They included: (a) Gibson and Dembo's (1984) *Teacher Efficacy Scale*, (b) Riggs and Enochs' (1990) *Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument*, (c) Ashton, et al.'s (1982) *Ashton Vignettes*, and (d) Bandura's (undated) *Teacher Efficacy Scale*. Only one, Gibson and Dembo's *Teacher Efficacy Scale*, gained wide use in the research literature (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). However, I briefly discuss both Gibson and Dembo's and Bandura's teacher efficacy scales to illustrate problems that led to the development of Tschannen-Moran, et al.'s new model and more recent measurements of teacher efficacy.

Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed a questionnaire to measure the dimensions of teacher efficacy, both general and personal. Specifically, the measurement was designed to correspond with both factors of Bandura's efficacy theory – outcome expectancies and efficacy expectancies. Gibson and Dembo created the *Teacher Efficacy Scale* in three phases that included item analysis and classroom observation. They used teachers' responses to the questionnaire to examine the relationship between teacher efficacy and observable teacher behaviors. Their study identified the differences between high and low efficacy teachers. Highs exhibited positive teaching behaviors, and these resulted in higher student achievement than teachers with low efficacy.

Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998) noted questions raised by Skinner (1996) about the construct of efficacy and uncovered problems with Gibson's and Dembo's *Teacher Efficacy Scale*. Skinner (1996) noted that self-efficacy theory usually distinguishes among *agents* (one who exerts control), *means* (path by which agent exerts control), and *ends of control* (outcomes). What was unusual is that self-efficacy theory made a distinction between *competence* (agent-means relationships) and *contingency* (means-ends relationships). Agent-means relationships can be represented by the statement, "I can execute the actions" and means-ends relationships can be represented by, "the actions will attain certain outcomes" (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998, p. 210). However, Skinner noted that limited research studies existed that considered means-ends relationships (response-outcome expectations) when studying self-efficacy. In fact, he pointed out that typically only efficacy was examined, rather than both efficacy and response-outcome expectations. Researchers, such as Tschannen-Moran, et al., argued that consideration of means-ends relationships was important to a full understanding of teacher efficacy and worked to create a new measurement that accurately considered both dimensions.

Bandura (1997) also recognized problems with existing teacher efficacy measures, noting that the construct cannot be neatly measured across different tasks and/or subjects (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). As a result he created a 30-item measurement, consisting of seven subscales in order to understand the relationship of efficacy and areas such as instructional efficacy, disciplinary efficacy, efficacy to enlist parental involvement, and more by attempting to create a broader view and understanding of efficacy without being too narrow like existing measurements (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998) introduced an integrated model of teacher efficacy. It proposed that two key components must be considered when evaluating teacher efficacy. The first is the teaching task and its context. They argued that teacher efficacy is context specific, as they write, “teachers do not feel equally efficacious for all teaching situations” (p. 227). This component is significant as the researchers noted that teachers’ sense of efficacy varies across different subject areas with certain students and various settings. For example, this means that a high school science teacher may feel a sense of efficacy when teaching biology to ninth graders, but less so when teaching middle school general science or perhaps even chemistry to eleventh graders. In addition, science teachers may feel a strong sense of efficacy in the content area of science, but a low sense when asked to incorporate content literacy into their instruction. Similarly, a seventh grade social studies teacher may feel efficacious teaching history, but far less so when incorporating content literacy into this subject area.

Furthermore, the other component considered in this integrated model is how teachers assess their strengths and weaknesses in relationship to the task at hand or, in other words, how self-perceptions of their teaching competence weigh into their judgments about efficacy for the task at hand (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). With this in mind, the researchers defined teacher efficacy as a “teacher’s belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (p. 233).

Tschannen-Moran and her colleagues (1998) noted that beliefs are not only specific to particular teaching contexts, but are cyclical in nature such that beliefs influence new behaviors, which in turn create a reinforcing cycle. In other words, if one

has a high sense of teacher efficacy for a particular task, then he or she is more likely to persist with it until he or she is successful, which in turn positively impacts his or her sense of efficacy for that task, and this likely leads to new positive behaviors. However, the researchers noted that the cycle also works in the reverse; low efficacy can impact one's willingness to persist with a task when faced with challenges, causing them to give up before experiencing success, which contributes to a lower sense of efficacy and feeds the cycle in the reverse direction.

Recognition of the cyclical nature of a teacher's sense of efficacy is important because it is related to student achievement. Tschannen-Moran and her colleagues felt they improved upon other models of teacher efficacy not only by recognizing that the analysis of the teaching task requires consideration of means-ends relationships specific to the teaching situation, but also by making explicit the judgment of personal competence in light of analysis of the task and situation.

In response to problems with existing measures of teacher efficacy and in an effort to address Tschannen-Moran, et al.'s integrated model of teacher efficacy, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), together with eight graduate students, worked to develop a new measure of efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy suggested that a valid measure of teacher efficacy must assess both personal competence and an analysis of the task in terms of the resources and constraints in particular teaching contexts. During a seminar on self-efficacy in teaching and learning at Ohio State University, the researchers and graduate students explored several different existing efficacy measures such as a Likert-type scale like Gibson and Dembo (1984) created and an expanded scale that Bandura (undated) created, but whose reliability and validity was

not available. The group decided to adapt Bandura's scale and worked to modify the expanded list of teacher capabilities. The end result was a 52 item scale to assess a full range of teaching tasks and capabilities, of these 23 of 30 items included on Bandura's original scale were retained. A 9-point scale was used to assess each item. The new measure was named the *Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES)* and it was tested over a series of three studies.

The first study reduced the number of items from 52 to 32. The second study reduced the number of items from 32 to 18 made up of three subscales. The third study developed and tested 18 additional items. The final measurement had two forms, a long one with 24 items and a short with 12. In addition, the factor structure, reliability, and validity were examined as well as its appropriateness of use with preservice and inservice teachers. Both were found to be valid and reliable instruments that assessed a broad range of teaching tasks. The new measurement examined three dimensions of efficacy, including instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy consider this new instrument a step in the right direction for measuring a broad range of teaching tasks without being too specific so that it cannot be used to compare teachers across contexts, levels, and subjects.

In another work, Graham, Harris, Fink and MacArthur (2001) conducted a two phase study in which they developed and partially validated an instrument for measuring teacher efficacy for writing instruction (an important component of literacy instruction) with teachers in Grades 1-3 during the first phase. In the second phase, the researchers examined whether or not teachers' beliefs about writing instruction, the number and nature of students in their classroom, the type of school, and organizational factors such

as resources predicted teacher efficacy. They held grade, gender, and years of teaching experience constant. The participants were selected using a stratified random sampling procedure from a database of 1,643,383 teachers. Of the 220 selected, 153 agreed to participate. Participants completed questions related to demographic information and three survey instruments. The first instrument, *Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW)*, was an adaptation of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) *Teacher Efficacy Scale* and was designed to measure teacher efficacy in writing. It included 16 items that were worded so they were relevant to writing instruction at the elementary level. The next instrument, *Writing Orientation Scale* (Graham, et al., 2002), was a 13-item questionnaire that used a 6-point Likert scale to measure teachers' beliefs and orientations toward teaching of writing. The third instrument, *Teaching Writing Scale* (Graham, et al., 2002) included 19 items, used a 7-point Likert scale, and was designed to assess how often teachers employed common instructional practices when teaching writing at the early elementary grades.

A factor analysis of the teacher efficacy instrument for writing was conducted and yielded 2 dimensions (personal efficacy and general efficacy), which were both reliable and only slightly correlated with each other. Graham, et al. (2001) used nonhierarchical regression analysis to predict teacher efficacy in writing. ANOVA was used to understand classroom practices. Findings showed that the reported classroom practices of high- and low-efficacy teachers differed. For example, teachers with high personal or general efficacy for writing reported that their students spent more time composing than students in classrooms of teachers with low efficacy. The study also found that teachers'



orientations to writing instruction predicted both personal and general efficacy after controlling for teacher, student, and school characteristics.

More recently, Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011) investigated the antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching and the relationship of these beliefs to self-efficacy for teaching in general. Participants included 648 teachers from 20 elementary and 6 middle schools in three states recruited through convenience sample of a diverse selection of schools willing to participate in the study. According to the researchers, they developed the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Instruction (TSELI)* instrument in order to measure the subject-specific aspect of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs.

A 33-item survey was created drawing on aspects of literacy instruction taken from language arts and reading standards developed by two professional organizations. The items were reviewed by experts in the field of reading and literacy instruction and field tested by graduate students. The *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)* was used to measure teachers' efficacy for general aspects of teaching and was previously discussed and referred to as OSTES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The TSES contains 12 items that includes three 4-item subscales: self-efficacy for instructional strategies, self-efficacy for student engagement, and self-efficacy for classroom management.

Demographic information including gender, race, and years of teaching experience was collected from participants. Context variables such as the teaching level (elementary or middle), proportion of low socioeconomic students in the school, school setting (urban, suburban or rural), and level of literacy-related resources and availability

of support (i.e., ability to purchase books for the classroom and quality of school library) were examined. Preparation and experience variables were also examined. For example, the researchers assessed participants' highest level of education and whether or not they had participated in a teachers-as-readers group.

The findings included: (a) demographics were weak predictors of TSELI such that race had no significant impact, and gender only explained a small proportion of the variance; (b) years of experience of teaching were unrelated to self-efficacy beliefs; (c) highest level of education attained and ratings of quality of professional development characterized verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences and contributed to TSELI in both bivariate and multivariate analyses; (d) ratings of quality of teacher preparation made an independent contribution to teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for literacy instruction in the regression analysis; (e) attainment of a higher degree of education was unrelated to self-efficacy for literacy instruction in ANOVA, but made an independent contribution to the explanation of TSELI when combined with other variables in the regression analysis; (f) participation in quality professional development experiences were related to self-efficacy beliefs for literacy instruction; (g) contextual factors were related to TSELI (i.e., availability of resources to purchase books for classroom was related to higher TSELI; school level, more specifically, elementary teachers had a stronger self-efficacy for literacy instruction than middle school teachers; school setting and proportion of low socioeconomic students only played a small role in relation to self-efficacy for literacy instruction); (h) teachers' general self-efficacy beliefs and their more specific TSELI are related, but distinct constructs.

Regardless of researchers' disagreements about the measurement of teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998), specifically, questions that surround the second factor of Bandura's two-factor theory of efficacy (outcome expectancies) and create problems with measuring teacher efficacy, the research shows that teachers' sense of efficacy is a strong predictor of productive teaching practices. It found that those with a high sense of efficacy employ classroom practices that contribute to student success, and those with a lower sense of efficacy utilize less productive teaching practices (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross, 1992).

### **Teachers' sense of efficacy and professional development.**

This section discusses key studies related to teacher efficacy and professional development. I begin with a discussion of Ross's study (1992); he found that student achievement was higher in classrooms of teachers who interacted the most with coaches and in classrooms with teachers with high personal teacher efficacy beliefs. Henson (2001) supported ongoing, collaborative professional development as a way to improve teacher efficacy, including those most resistant to change. Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009) considered four modes of professional development intended to teach teachers how to implement a new reading skill. Their results showed that efficacy levels did not increase throughout the study, rather that teachers experienced what was referred to as a "dip" or decrease in efficacy that increased only within the context of teachers' classrooms and with the support of a coach. Takahashi (2011) highlights the importance of the role context plays in efficacy development. She demonstrated that strong efficacy beliefs were collectively co-constructed and reinforced during teachers' collegial practices.

Ross (1992) studied the relationship between student achievement, teacher efficacy, and coaching in middle grades. Participants included six coaches assigned to work with 18 teachers of 36 sections of history classes of students in grades seven and eight. They were charged with implementing a new history curriculum and were provided with the following: (a) curriculum guideline and supporting materials, (b) three half-day workshops spread across the school year, followed by a cycle of large group demonstration, small group coach-led practice, and feedback, and (c) contact with coaches that involved a minimum of one face-to-face and one telephone conversation. Except for two instances in which two coaches invited teachers into their classrooms to provide demonstration lessons, teacher observations were not included as part of the coach-teacher contact. At the start of the study, coaches met twice for in-service, and later they met for six half-days throughout the year to plan coaching activities and reflect on their experiences.

Student outcomes were measured using both a knowledge and a cognitive skills instrument, administered in September and May. Ross measured teacher efficacy in May by using a 16-item self-report instrument created by Gibson and Dembo (1984), and coaching using a self-administered teacher questionnaire in May and conducting individual teacher and coach interviews in June. His questionnaire focused on use of personnel resources such as coaches, other teachers, and school administrators. The interviews probed for coach participation in implementation of the curriculum.

He used descriptive statistics, step-wise multiple regression, and analysis of variance to analyze data. Ross thought it would be logical to link teacher efficacy to coaching, because teachers with high teacher efficacy are likely to view coaching as an

opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills. On the other hand, teachers with low teacher efficacy may consider coaching as “one more thing to do.” Furthermore, he conjectured that efficacious teachers would probably be more willing to risk redirection or suggestions for improvement from a coach.

His findings indicated that student achievement was higher in the classrooms of teachers with high personal teacher efficacy beliefs and in classrooms of teachers who interacted the most with coaches. However, teachers who reported working more with administrators and less with coaches obtained lower student achievement. No interaction between coaching, teacher efficacy, and achievement was found. Data revealed that all teachers, regardless of their level of efficacy, benefited from more contact with coaches.

Ross noted two previous studies (Poole & Okeafor, 1989 and Poole, Okeafor, & Sloan, 1989) that considered the relationships between teacher practice, efficacy, and collaboration. Collaboration served as an informal mode of coaching. The study results found that coaching interacted with efficacy in counter-intuitive ways. More specifically, Poole and Okeafor (1989) found that teachers with high general efficacy had higher implementation if they collaborated more with other teachers. Poole, Okeafor, and Sloan (1989) found that teachers with high personal efficacy were more likely to implement district curriculum guides if they collaborated less with other teachers. Ross therefore hypothesized that coaching interacted with efficacy in some other way.

Henson (2001) studied the impact of a year-long teacher research initiative as a mode of professional development on teacher efficacy. More specifically, the research questions focused on the impact of teacher empowerment, collaboration, and perceptions of school climate on teacher efficacy within the context of participatory teacher research.

The participatory teacher research involved six study team meetings that lasted two to three hours each and small group meetings as needed. During the study team meetings, teachers brainstormed to identify instructional challenges, devised data-based methods and discussed how they corroborated or refuted their perception of these challenges, briefly reviewed related literature, and developed intervention studies to impact the challenge they identified. Following the study team meetings, teachers implemented the studies and came back together after implementation to evaluate its effectiveness. Mentor teacher researchers from a nearby high school facilitated the meetings.

Henson noted that participatory teacher research has been suggested as a way to foster meaningful professional development for teachers through a collaborative process “by which teachers themselves critically examine their classrooms, develop and implement educational interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions” all of which allows them “to actively participate in the development of practical knowledge about teaching” (p. 819). The approach and intent of participatory teacher research are similar to the collaborative literacy coaching design of the present study, except that the professional development initiative in the present study did not involve teachers formally evaluating the effectiveness of the new literacy strategies and activities they studied and tried to implement. In other words, the present study was never intended to fit a particular form or model of teacher research such as one of the various approaches of teacher action research.

Henson’s study took place in a large alternative and special education school district in the southwest United States. Her participants included eight teachers and three

instructional assistants who served elementary, middle, and high school grades. A variety of data sources were collected.

Teachers were interviewed for approximately 30 minutes each using eight pre-determined questions at the beginning and end of the project. The researcher took field notes to capture teachers' interactions and evolutions throughout observations of the project. Teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy were measured using a pre- and post-administration of the *Teacher Efficacy Scale* (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Additionally, teachers' sense of empowerment and their perceptions of school climate were measured.

Data were examined using qualitative and quantitative analyses. The first research question regarding changes in teacher efficacy was determined using descriptive statistics and repeated measures analyses of the three scales as well as constant comparative analysis of themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of interviews and field notes. Increases occurred for both personal and general teacher efficacy and were supported by both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Henson's (2001) second research question regarding whether gains in variables could be attributed to teacher levels of implementation was determined by regressing general and personal teaching efficacies, empowerment, collaboration, and school climate scores on teacher implementation scores. No relationship of statistical significance was found between gains in general and personal teaching efficacies, empowerment, collaboration, or school climate scores and teacher levels of implementation. In other words, implementation was not predictive for any of these variables.

Two levels of analyses were conducted to answer the third research question regarding empowerment, collaboration, and school climate as predictors of teacher efficacy. The results found that empowerment gains were not predictive or related to gains in general or personal efficacy. Additionally, results found that collaboration was related to general teaching efficacy gains and both pre- and post-scores for collaboration were predictive of general teaching efficacy scores. Lastly, school climate was not related to general or personal teaching efficacy gains, but the pre-test scores for school climate were predictive of personal teaching efficacy only. The qualitative analyses supported the quantitative findings for all three variables.

Henson noted that the study was significant because it suggested teacher research was a powerful method of professional development for changing teacher efficacy. She added that what made this form of professional development unique from others and contributed to its success was its focus on opportunity for collaboration and for teachers to exercise “human agency” (p. 832), which impacted efficacy judgments. Henson also noted that teachers with the lowest collaboration scores in this study made the greatest gains, which she believed was encouraging since teachers who don’t collaborate with others often have the most to gain.

Henson did suggest a possible explanation for efficacy gains in the study. She stated that the alternative setting in which the study occurred might have presented a unique opportunity for teachers to perceive success in a climate in which few successes occur. These were insights presented in teacher interviews.

Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009) studied the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and four different professional development formats to teach a new skill and



the implementation of that skill in teaching reading. The researchers used a quasi-experimental design and placed nine schools from five different public school districts into one of four treatment groups and then administered professional development to four schools in the spring and to the remaining five schools the following fall. Ninety-three resource and K-2 teachers participated. The Tucker Signing Strategies for Reading was selected as the teaching strategy to be taught in all four professional development groups (Tucker, 2001). The researchers administered teacher self-efficacy surveys before and after each professional development format in order to measure self-efficacy increases using the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and an adaptation of the Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011) measure of teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy instruction. Implementation of the Tucker method was also measured. Descriptive statistics and repeated-measures ANOVAs were conducted to analyze data sources.

The first treatment group received information only and verbal persuasion was the identified source of self-efficacy. They participated in a 3-hour workshop that aligned with the Tucker training manual and used lecture format to present and demonstrate the strategy as well as answer participants' questions. The second treatment group received information plus modeling and vicarious experience was the identified source of self-efficacy. Approximately 20 minutes of the 3-hour workshop was spent modeling use of the Tucker strategies with local students selected by the teachers. The third treatment group received information plus modeling and a one-and-a-half-hour practice session, making the entire treatment 4 hours and 30 minutes long. The identified source of self-efficacy was a protected mastery experience. Teachers had time to work in groups to

decide how to use the strategies, plan lessons, and practice implementation of the strategies. The fourth treatment group involved information plus modeling, practice, and coaching. A stronger mastery experience with inclusion of follow-up coaching was used. Coaching occurred in the weeks following the workshops and involved: (a) 30-minute review of strategies, (b) 15-minute one-on-one coaching conversation, and (c) 30-minute coaching session in the teachers' classroom.

The researchers found that the first three treatment groups were related to modest gains in teacher self-efficacy and the first treatment was also related to gains in teacher efficacy for reading instruction. However, they were not related to increases in implementation of the target strategy. The fourth treatment, the one that included mastery experience that included use of the strategy in the teachers' classroom and support of a coach was related to increased teacher self-efficacy for reading instruction and implementation of the target strategy.

Tschannen-Moran and McMaster concluded that the process of influencing teachers' self-efficacy is complex and not straightforward. Findings showed that self-efficacy did not increase incrementally with the addition of sources of self-efficacy. Instead, teachers experienced what was referred to as a "dip" or decrease in efficacy and the results demonstrated that self-efficacy and implementation increased only in the context of teachers' actual classrooms and with the support of a coach.

A recent study conducted by Takahashi (2011) used a socio-cultural framework, rather than social cognitive theory, to better understand how teacher efficacy beliefs are shaped. Specifically, the researcher was interested in knowing how to increase efficacy beliefs so that the negative cycle that ensues between low efficacy, low student

achievement, and low motivation can be broken or prevented. Takahashi argued that this is especially important for school settings with high populations of low-income and high minority students, because they tend to have the greatest number of teachers with low teacher efficacy, yet the highest number of diverse learners requiring teachers with willingness, perseverance, and resilience to try new practices to meet their needs.

A case study was conducted using a “communities of practice” approach to understand the relationship between teachers’ evidence-based decision-making practices and their efficacy beliefs. Takahashi noted that a sociocultural framework was useful for this study because it “attends to learning that occurs in shared work activities among a community of practitioners” instead of “seeing the environmental context as outside of and separate from individuals” (p. 734). Additionally, she explained that a communities of practice approach “draws connections between shared practices, collective meaning-making, and identity, that allow for a conceptualization of how participation in shared activities may connect to teachers’ efficacy beliefs” (p. 734).

This case study research took place within the context of a middle school located on the northeast coast of the United States that served a predominately high minority, low income population of students. The teachers were involved in evidence-based decision-making practices on a regular basis that included weekly meetings to look at student work to guide instruction. Participants included four teachers who taught either language arts or mathematics in Grades 6-8.

Teachers were each interviewed three different times over a three month period with only two exceptions. The first interview was not connected to any observation. The second interview occurred one day after the teacher was observed in his/her classroom.

The final interview occurred after observing the teacher in an evidence-based decision-making meeting. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a “two-level scheme” described by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 61). The first level of coding involved assigning broad categories such as “self efficacy” or “LASW” to represent looking at student work. The second level of coding involved developing codes that emerged from the themes. For example, “Purpose of LASW” and “Teacher support” emerged during the second-level coding for data coded “LASW”. The second-level codes were then arranged into “conceptually ordered matrices” (Miles & Huberman, 1994) so that patterns and themes could be identified when analyzing the data. Lastly, a “cognitive display” was created that consisted of themes written on note cards.

Findings indicated that teachers co-constructed their efficacy beliefs in shared practices. According to Takahashi this suggested that a communities of practice theory was useful in better understanding the development of teachers’ efficacy beliefs. Takahashi stated that although the collective data-analytic practices did not cause participants to have strong efficacy beliefs, they did suggest, based on the consistency of teachers’ comments about the meaning of student data and the purpose of data analysis, that strong efficacy beliefs were collectively co-constructed and reinforced during their collegial practices.

Takahashi recognized that the study’s findings highlighted the importance of context and its role in the development of efficacy beliefs and acknowledged that more needs to be known about the conceptualization of efficacy beliefs development within a sociocultural, social cognitive, and the intersection of the two approaches. Study findings regarding context are important to the present study, because teachers were provided with

the opportunity to engage in collaborative conversations about their instructional practices, student work, and more, which as Takahashi's study indicated might contribute to the development and/or reinforcement of strong teacher efficacy beliefs.

Since teacher efficacy has been associated with student achievement, it is important for more studies to explore this construct as it relates to professional development efforts. Given the high number of adolescents who struggle to comprehend subject matter text, it is also important to explore the relationship between teacher efficacy and professional development initiatives specific to content literacy instruction. The next section considers two studies related to this area.

#### **Teachers' sense of efficacy and content literacy.**

Cantrell and Hughes (2008) investigated the effects of yearlong professional development that included coaching on sixth and ninth grade teachers' efficacy for literacy instruction and collective efficacy. The study also explored the relationship between teacher efficacy and implementation of an approach for content literacy. Participants included 22 sixth- and ninth-grade teachers from 8 schools throughout a southeastern state who took part in a professional development program. The program was designed to help teachers use content literacy strategies to assist students with academic reading and content area learning.

Specifically, teachers participated in a weeklong summer institute, two regional follow-up meetings, and monthly on-site coaching. The professional development and coaching was delivered by a team whose members had expertise in content literacy and was led by a former middle school teacher with a master's degree in literacy. The summer institutes included explanation and modeling of strategies by a facilitator,

introduction of teacher participation with strategies, and time to plan for strategy use. The monthly coaching visits during the school year included team meetings to review and discuss strategies, individualized planning sessions, and modeled lessons. Teachers also received electronic and phone communication support from coaches. The three, full day, follow-up meetings involved sharing instructional artifacts, exploring pedagogical concepts and approaches, and planning for ongoing work. The professional development utilized a core text that outlined an apprenticeship approach to content literacy instruction (Schoenback, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999) and aimed for teachers to learn to engage students in before, during, and after reading activities with content texts in order to increase their comprehension of academic reading.

The study utilized a sequential mixed methods research design. Teacher efficacy was measured using pre- and post-test surveys that included 65 items drawn from existing teacher efficacy instruments developed by Woolfolk and Hoy (1990), Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), and Gibson and Dembo (1984) as well as a Collective Teacher Efficacy instrument developed by Goddard (2002). Observations measured implementation of content literacy strategies using an observation protocol designed to focus on the literacy environment, instruction, and assessment. Teachers were observed twice with the first observation occurring between September 1 and October 15 and the second observation occurring between April 1 and May 15. Teacher interviews provided insight into teacher efficacy development and implementation. Seventeen of the 22 participants attended an end-of-year meeting and were interviewed about their perceptions of the content literacy project using a closed interview protocol. Follow-up questions were asked if deemed necessary.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the variables of personal efficacy, general teaching efficacy, and collective teacher efficacy to answer the first research question about efficacy changes after participating in professional development. The second research question about the extent to which personal, general, and collective efficacy for literacy teaching are related to implementation of content literacy practices was determined by conducting bivariate correlations among the teacher efficacy subscales and observation protocol ratings in both the fall and spring.

Interviews were analyzed using a two-level coding system. First level involved coding expressions of teacher efficacy as “positive,” “negative,” or “neutral”. The second level involved creation of subcodes to categorize teachers’ attribution for their efficacy or for changes in efficacy as attributions emerged from the data. Occurrences of each code were counted and assertions were made based on the frequency of codes.

Findings for the first research question included: (a) teachers exhibited the greatest increase in their sense of personal efficacy for literacy teaching after participation in the yearlong professional development, (b) teachers also exhibited an increase in their general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching, although not as large as the increase in personal efficacy, and (c) small gains in collective efficacy occurred.

Findings for the second research question included: (a) correlations with personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching occurred at the point of the first observation, and (b) correlation with collective efficacy occurred at the point of the second observation. These findings suggest that personal and general efficacy were more important during early stages of strategy implementation and collective efficacy seemed more important during later stages of implementation.

Findings for the third research question included: (a) teachers indicated that coaching was important to efficacy development and implementation, (b) teachers indicated that opportunities to practice and master literacy practices was important to supporting their sense of efficacy for literacy instruction, and (c) teachers indicated that collaboration with other teachers in their building was important to their sense of efficacy and implementation. Identified barriers to teachers' sense of efficacy with literacy instruction included issues related to time – for example, not enough time to develop skills, to collaborate, and to implement and still cover content.

According to the researchers, this study was important for three main reasons. First, this study provided a model for professional development that was successful increasing teachers' personal, general, and collective efficacy for content literacy learning. They particularly noted the importance of a team approach to professional development that supported teachers' sense of collective efficacy, because not enough is known about collective efficacy. They also noted that this study's findings were consistent with earlier findings that demonstrated that long-term professional development and opportunities for teacher collaboration positively impacted teacher efficacy for literacy learning (Henson, 2001). Second, this study highlighted the relationship between teacher efficacy and content literacy implementation. The researchers suggested that based on the study's findings teachers' efficacy should be addressed and supported as teachers work to make instructional changes. Third, this study addressed how professional development and coaching could support teachers as they worked to implement content literacy – something they have long resisted. The researchers noted that this study was consistent with other findings that showed coaching



was linked to increases in teacher efficacy (Ross, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009) and provided support for teachers as they gained mastery experience with implementation of new techniques, the strongest source contributing to efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

In another study connected to the same professional development initiative, Cantrell and Callaway (2008) described the perceptions of high and low implementers of content literacy instruction within the context of this year-long professional development initiative using a teacher efficacy framework. The researchers proposed that understanding the efficacy characteristics of high and low implementers of content literacy instruction could help teacher educators' efforts to overcome teachers' barriers to content literacy implementation. The study did not seek to evaluate the professional development initiative, rather it aimed to examine the relationship between content literacy implementation and teacher efficacy.

Participants included 16 sixth and ninth-grade content area teachers selected from a pool of 78 teachers from six schools who took part in a year-long professional development initiative. Maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1990) was used to select a mix of participants implementing content strategies at high and low levels. Additionally, an equal number of participants from each school implementing strategies at high, moderate, and low levels were selected to minimize school effects.

The professional development initiative, Content Literacy Project (CLP), was designed to help teachers infuse literacy strategies into content areas. It consisted of a 5-day summer institute and monthly on-site coaching that involved sharing, modeling and demonstration of content literacy techniques. The professional development utilized a

core text that outlined an apprenticeship approach to content literacy instruction (Schoenback, et al., 1999) and aimed for teachers to learn to engage students in before, during, and after reading activities with content texts in order to increase their comprehension of academic reading. Coaches in this study, referred to as CLP trainers, worked for a private, non-profit professional development organization. The CLP trainers formed a team led by a former middle school teacher who had a master's in literacy and 20 years' experience in teacher training. Each CLP trainer had experience and expertise in content literacy instruction.

Data sources included two, semi-structured interviews with participants. The first interview took place in December after participants had engaged in the summer training and three to four coaching visits. The second interview took place in April near the end of the project. Interview questions were designed to invite responses about participants' general, personal, and collective efficacy for literacy teaching. Interview transcripts were analyzed using a multi-phase process that involved establishing codes, calculating counts for each code to help identify patterns and themes, and creating data tables. The data tables included all utterances from transcripts assigned a particular code and were listed by participant identification numbers and arranged for analysis according to implementation levels and coding categories.

Findings included similarities and differences in general, personal, and collective efficacy for literacy teaching for groups of teachers characterized as high and low implementers. Additionally, the groups were distinguished by their perceptions related to "teachers' influence on student literacy achievement, their own abilities to address students' literacy needs, and their roles and responsibilities as content teachers related to

literacy instruction.” (p. 1744). More specifically, high implementers were characterized by having higher levels of general, personal, and collective efficacy. However, lower levels of efficacy for literacy teaching characterized low implementers. Both groups had positive perceptions of content literacy, but high implementers were characterized as having more persistence in overcoming content literacy implementation barriers.

According to Cantrell and Callaway (2008), the study’s findings supported earlier research that indicated that teacher efficacy is related to attitudes about implementation of educational innovations (Ross, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Findings indicated that teachers who supported content literacy and implemented strategies at high levels had higher general, personal, and collective teacher efficacy. Other findings indicated that teachers’ personal efficacy for literacy teaching and beliefs about how content literacy is important to their individual content area strengthened over time. According to the researchers, this finding is supported by earlier research that found teachers believed content literacy to be important and they wanted to do a good job but they lacked the skills or confidence to adequately implement it into their classrooms (Greenleaf, et al., 2001; Hall, 2005). Additionally, this finding lends support for earlier research findings that found that efficacy can be developed through extended professional development designed to engage teachers in meaningful activities that challenge their existing beliefs about teachers and students (Cantrell et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Wedman & Robinson, 1988). According to Cantrell and Callaway, extended professional development opportunities are important to all teachers, but more time might be especially important for teachers’ with low efficacy and/or resistance to content literacy.

Results also supported earlier research that teachers' analysis of the teaching task and their beliefs about their capacity to produce positive outcomes is central to teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). For example, low implementers in the study felt that the content literacy strategies were an add on and took too much time, which according to Cantrell and Callaway was in conflict with their beliefs that covering content is what will lead to test preparation and student gains.

Cantrell and Callaway reported that both high and low implementers experienced barriers. However, they noted that high implementers were able to persist through the barriers in order to successfully implement content literacy strategies. Cantrell and Callaway noted that this is consistent with earlier research that found that teacher efficacy decreased during implementation efforts, which was referred to by Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009) as an implementation dip, and recovered with the help of coaching (Ross, 1994; Ross, McKeiver, & Hogaboam-Gray, 1997; Stein & Wang, 1988).

As a result of their study's findings, Cantrell and Callaway concluded that implementation of content literacy strategies was related to teacher efficacy and that teacher efficacy needed to be considered as part of content literacy implementation efforts in order for them to be successful.

### **Literacy Coaching**

Middle and high school literacy teaching must improve. Never before has accountability been more emphasized, nor attention to the number of struggling adolescents greater or more widely publicized than in the last decade. Coaching is an excellent method for literacy reform. Numerous organizations have distributed policy and position papers on the topic calling for change (Alvermann, 2001; Biancarosa &

Snow, 2004; Kamil, 2003; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999; NASBE, 2005; NASSP, 2005; NCTE, 2006; NGACBP, 2005). The topic of adolescent literacy has been considered “very hot” for five consecutive years on the International Reading Association’s annual survey of topics according to literacy leaders (Cassidy, Ortlieb, & Shettel, 2011). Also included on the 2011 list of “What’s Hot” topics was literacy coaching/reading coaching. Literacy coaching is widely supported as holding promise to transform secondary literacy instruction. For example, Sturtevant, Boyd, Brozo, Hinchman, Moore, and Alvermann (2006) stated:

Our review of the school change record shows that admonitions such as ‘every teacher should be a teacher of reading’ will not lead to curricular changes in science, math, and history unless teachers (a) are adequately prepared in content area literacy strategies, (b) can directly observe the benefits of such strategies, (c) can support one another in their attempts to implement new literacy strategies, and (d) are able to reflect on and refine strategy instruction over time. Coaches lead teaching staff through these actions. (p. 144)

Given the high number of struggling adolescents, the need to reform secondary literacy instruction, and the attention and promise being placed on literacy coaching, a review of the professional literature was pertinent. More importantly, the present study utilized a collaborative literacy coaching approach and was interested in its impact on participants’ personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching.

### **Literacy coaching as a form of professional development.**

Literacy coaching is considered a vehicle for literacy reform that is grounded in the components of high quality professional development. The *Reading Next* document identified fifteen key elements of effective adolescent literacy programs (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). Included among them is professional development that is “long term and ongoing” (p. 4). According to IRA (2006), some components of effective professional development identified by researchers (Darling-Hammond & McLaughline, 1995; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001) that are included in literacy coaching are:

- Grounded in inquiry and reflection;
- Participant-driven and collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among teachers within communities of practice;
- Sustained, ongoing, and intensive; and
- Connected to and derived from teachers’ ongoing work with their students (IRA, 2006, p. 3).

The fact that literacy coaching includes components of effective professional development is important to this study and its impact on adolescent literacy instruction because “Professional development delivered as sustained, job-embedded coaching, maximizes the likelihood that teachers will translate newly learned skills and strategies into practice” (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, p. 3). Given secondary teachers’ history of resistance, increased odds of implementation are significant. In addition, Marzano (2003) reviewed the research on effective practices that impacted student achievement. The review uncovered a suggestion that professional development be connected to teachers’ attempts to apply the practices they are taught. Marzano suggested that the process of learning and applying new practices occur within the context of specific content areas.

Both his finding from the research and his suggestions support literacy coaching. It provides job-embedded, content and context-specific support as teachers work to implement newly learned strategies.

Moreover, professional development is key to teacher learning and highly qualified teachers are the “single best safeguard against school failure” (Sailors & Shanklin, 2010, p. 1). In order to see results, the form of professional development selected to support teacher learning must contain components as identified as highly effective by research. Support and feedback are two such components and they are an important part of literacy coaching (Bean & Eisenberg, 2009). When the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (2001) issued standards for professional development, it called attention to content, process, and context. Literacy coaching respects all three. First, coaching recognizes the importance of content as it focuses on helping teachers increase their knowledge. Second, it adheres to processes that are compatible with adult learning and getting teachers to change their instructional practices and incorporate new strategies. Finally, it respects the context of its environment. In this study, attention to context involves understanding the complexities and characteristics specific to secondary schools, classrooms, teachers, and students. Bean and Eisenberg (2009) note that coaching has been used as part of the successful implementation of school literacy reforms (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, & Wasik, 1996; Taylor, Pressley & Pearson, 2002), albeit it was called something other than coaching (ie. facilitator).

### **From reading specialists to literacy coaches.**

Literacy coaching can trace its roots back to reading specialists. They have assumed many and varied responsibilities over the years. Bean (2004) notes that by

functioning as supervisors who worked with teachers to improve school reading programs, reading specialists performed coach-like roles as early as 1930. Today reading specialists and literacy coaches are considered separate positions. Dole and Donaldson (2006) distinguish between reading specialists and literacy coaches noting, “Reading coaches are different from specialists in that coaches spend their entire time with teachers, not students” (p. 5).

The creation of Title I funding, a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, marked the beginning of the first federal initiative for compensatory reading programs and wide use of reading specialists in American schools. According to Dole (2004), this funding source allowed the removal of struggling readers from regular classroom instruction and placed them in one-on-one or in small groups with a reading specialist. Robinson and Rauch (as cited in Vogt & Schearer, 2007, p. 17) identified their roles as “resource person, adviser, in-service leader, investigator, diagnostician, instructor, and evaluator.” During this time, Stauffer according to Bean (2004) recognized problems with reading specialists working solely in remedial roles. He likened it to a “bottomless pit” (p. 2) and called for specialists to serve as consultants. Yet, for the next 20 years reading specialists continued to work primarily with students. As a result, with the growth of Title I compensatory reading programs came recommendations for change (Bean, 2004).

By 1988 new legislation brought changes to the existing roles and responsibilities of reading specialists. As a result, they no longer primarily worked with students removed from classrooms; rather between 1985-1992 they provided instruction to students in regular classrooms (Quatroche, Bean, & Hamilton, 2001). Additionally, the



increase in the number of schools that had 75% or more of their students from low-income households forced a change in the role of the reading specialist. Under federal guidelines, these schools qualified for a reading specialist (Quatroche, et al., 2001). However, the continuing lack of desired long term results for struggling readers resulted in districts downsizing the number of reading specialists in schools during the 1990s (Bean, 2004).

As a result, the ways in which reading specialists changed how they performed their role of working with students is an important shift in the evolution from reading specialist to literacy coach. This shift required reading specialists to change from assisting students to assisting teachers. The result should be that classroom teachers are better equipped to address the needs of a growing number of struggling readers.

Additionally, the Reading First Initiative identified reading coaches as a “viable and important professional development component for Reading First schools” (USDOE, 2002 in Dole, 2004, p. 462) and made funding available for the creation of coaching positions. Hence, an explosion of reading/literacy coaches occurred in schools across the United States from this point forward prompting an immediate change from reading specialists to reading/literacy coaches. As a result of Reading First funding, the transformation from reading specialist to literacy/reading coach appeared to occur overnight rather than slowly and gradually. The role of coach was created to increase student achievement by not working directly with students. By working with teachers to increase or enhance their instructional practices, the position of literacy coach was implemented faster than research existed to support the effectiveness of coaching (Toll, 2009). This implementation resulted in a redefining of the role of the reading specialist.

### **Impact of literacy coaching.**

The promise of coaching and its popularity spread across the country and school districts faster than the evidence-base for it did. Research on the impact of literacy coaching is in its infancy. Moreover, the majority of the early research was as Toll (2009) observed, “either descriptive or evaluative of particular literacy coaching programs” or accounts of literacy coaches’ roles and responsibilities (p. 66). The emphasis was on descriptions of coaching – what it was, what coaches did and how they spent their time. Before its effectiveness could properly be evaluated, its titles, roles, and responsibilities needed to be clarified. Early descriptive studies, including program and district-wide evaluations, did not assess the impact of coaching on student achievement or instruction. Additionally, early studies that did investigate its impact, but did not examine differences within literacy coaching; rather they treated coaching as the same across all professional development efforts. In addition, the research designs did not separate the effects of coaching from other professional development components. For example, Fisher, Frey, Lapp, and Flood (2004) reported positive changes as the result of a school-wide, high school literacy initiative that included coaching teachers. However, too many variables were involved to know if coaching made the difference in student achievement. The sum of early research on literacy coaching did not produce a definitive demonstration of its effectiveness on student achievement, the hope of its use and large-scale implementation. In order to accomplish this, much more research was needed. The following sections discuss both early and more recent contributions that are moving the larger body of research towards a more definitive stamp of approval for literacy

coaching's positive impact on several areas, including but not limited to student achievement.

***Early descriptive studies – districts and programs.***

Most early literacy coaching studies included a look at coaching in action in urban districts across the country from Boston to San Diego (Neufeld, 2002; Neufeld & Roper, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c) as well as within schools using the commercial program America's Choice, a comprehensive reform model (Poglinco, et al., 2003). The following section discusses each of these evaluations.

Combined, Neufeld and Roper published five reports on coaching. Three of them detailed the pilot and first two years of Boston Public School's Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) reform initiative (Neufeld, 2002; Neufeld & Roper, 2002, 2003a). These three informed the present study's original coaching design. Boston Public School's CCL, along with two other initiatives discussed later in the review, were district-wide, involved grades K-12, and based upon a theory of action that related to an entire school including building leadership and creation of a collaborative culture where teachers learn (Neufeld, 2002). Central to supporting a collaborative culture was the incorporation of: demonstration lessons, reading of professional literature, interaction of colleagues within inquiry groups, and observation, practice, and reflection to improve instruction (Neufeld, 2002). A fourth report focused on the coaching efforts in two middle schools in San Diego (Neufeld & Roper, 2003b). A fifth, co-published by The Annenberg Institute for School Reform and The Aspen Institute Program on Education, described the work of coaches in four urban districts, including the Boston Public Schools (Neufeld & Roper, 2003c).

Neufeld (2002) interviewed 24 content/literacy coaches and 17 whole-school change coaches in order to compile a report about the pilot year of Boston's CCL. The report identified challenges faced by coaches, examined the organization and focus of the CCL, and considered the implications of this coaching model for addressing the identified problems before scaling up the initiative. Coaches identified, among other challenges, resistant teachers, weak building-level leadership, lack of knowledge and skills necessary for implementation of Readers' and Writers' Workshop, and lack of time. The report concluded that the organization and focus of the initiative were sufficient to address and overcome most of the identified challenges, but it also noted that training and supervision of coaches as well as effective principal leadership was needed for the CCL to be successful.

Twenty-six Boston Public Schools, classified as Effective Practice (EP) schools, implemented CCL for the first time during the 2001-2002 school year. Neufeld and Roper (2002) observed seven CCL cycles and interviewed principals, teachers, and coaches in four of the EP schools. Additionally, they interviewed the designers of CCL. Based on their observations and interviews, the researchers concluded that the CCL model was sound. Their report detailed the model's benefits and challenges as well as new issues that arose during the first year of implementation. Some of the benefits of the model included: finding a focus for one's learning, engaging in learning conversations with colleagues, and having the opportunity to see practices modeled. Challenges included problems with scheduling, length of time for CCL cycle, and number of coach allocations per school. New issues that arose out of Year I implementation included the need for coach-specific professional development and adaptation of site-specific

challenges such as: engaging resistant teachers, adapting workshop model for bilingual students, identifying course of study for cadres, and establishing host/demonstration classrooms. The researchers noted adaptations that were made to the CCL model during the first year and concluded that local adaptations not only strengthened the model, but were also necessary.

Neufeld and Roper (2003) studied Year II implementation of CCL. They examined its practices and outcomes, and they did so by focusing on the professional development coaches' and teachers' implementation of Readers' and Writers' Workshops. They observed eight laboratory sites and interviewed 39 principals, coaches, and teachers. The researchers concluded the following: the model was valuable, teachers had a greater voice in determining the focus of their work, teachers' reflection deepened, some teachers were still reluctant to demonstrate lessons or host program study, and the number of teachers participating increased. They noted the impact of CCL model during Year II included increased understanding of CCL as a learning process, increased commitment to and ownership of individual professional development, increased teacher collaboration around instruction and slight improvement in demonstrated instruction. According to the researchers, impact on instruction was not determined through classroom observations, but it was inferred through teachers' comments about changes in instruction. The researchers' various challenges that faced the future of CCL, included understanding how principals and coaches supported CCL and how teachers' workshop knowledge and skills influenced involvement in CCL.

Neufeld and Roper (2003b) also studied the in-house coaching models of two middle schools in San Diego. They interviewed 11 teachers, coaches, and administrators

at one middle school, 15 at the other and several consultants working with both middle schools. In addition they conducted two follow-up interviews at each school several months after the coaching efforts had been implemented. The final report described how coaches' work and teachers' learning aligned with initiative's literacy goals, teachers' views of how coaching supported their work, coaching design and its impact, and coaching challenges. Neufeld and Roper concluded that the coaching models helped create a collaborative learning culture and that the principals were key to implementation. They also noted that a school's design which provided literacy coaches with reduced teaching loads was more effective than one, which required substitute coverage in order for the coach to have time to work with colleagues.

In a report co-published by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and the Aspen Institute Program on Education, Neufeld and Roper (2003c) drew upon their previous studies on coaching in Boston, San Diego, Louisville, and Corpus Christi Public Schools as well as a larger review of the literature. The report described what coaches did, how coaches were prepared, what conditions supported coaching, what challenges coaching presented, and the impact of coaching. They concluded that when coaching is part of a larger instructional improvement plan, "it has the potential to become a powerful vehicle for improving instruction and, thereby, student achievement" (p. 26).

A report prepared by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and funded by the Carnegie Foundation studied at the experiences of the Boston and Houston Public School Districts with coaching in order to assist other districts with implementation and school reform efforts (Schen, Rao, & Dobles, 2005). The researchers described the experiences of six coaches in these two districts. Houston was in its first year of

implementing coaching with loosely defined roles and responsibilities in each of its twenty-four comprehensive high schools, and Boston was in its ninth year of implementation with approximately eighty coaches working in grades K-12. In addition to providing an overview of each district's coaching initiative and thumbnail portraits of the six coaches, the report presented discussion points about coaching roles, support and accountability. Like previously discussed reports, the impact of coaching on student achievement was not evaluated but was mentioned as a logical promise of full implementation of coaching efforts.

Poglinco, et al. (2003) studied 27 schools (18 elementary and 9 middle schools) using the program America's Choice that included coaching as a component. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at the University of Pennsylvania conducted an external review of the implementation and impact of America's Choice design. This report was part of the external review and according to the authors, sought to answer the following questions: Was America's Choice reform design implemented as intended? Were teachers' practices changed in ways that would improve student achievement as a result of implementation of America's Choice? To what degree could improvements in student achievement be attributed to America's Choice design? The researchers used a variety of data sources such as surveys, interviews, observations, state and local assessments, and documents to answer their questions. This particular report did not evaluate student achievement, but others within the external review did. The report included descriptions of the coaching model, research design, various aspects related to implementation of the coaching model, and conclusions. Aspects of the coaching model related to implementation included descriptions of the role of the coach,

rollout of the literacy workshops, one-on-one coaching, group professional development, relationship of coaching to standards-based instruction, and coaching effectiveness. The researchers noted that the schools involved in this report were in the first year of implementation of America's Choice. As a result they were showing early signs of fidelity to the model.

***Early studies of impact of literacy coaching and student achievement.***

In addition to program evaluations, early research included several statewide reviews of federally funded Reading First Programs that included coaching as a required component. The impact of coaching on student outcomes was not rigorously evaluated in many of these evaluations such as those in Alabama (Norton, 2007), Alaska (Barton & Lawraker, 2006), or Idaho (Reed & Rettig, 2006). However, some states, including Kentucky and Alabama, pointed to positive changes accomplished as part of their statewide efforts to expand coaching across districts in the state in grades beyond K-3. Results were mixed for studies that examined the impact of coaching on student achievement (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2008; Marsh, McCombs, & Naftel, 2008). The national review of the Reading First Program (Gamse, Jacob, Horst, Boulay, & Unlu, 2008) found no impact on student achievement. One study, Garet, et al. (2008), was conducted at the elementary level and the other study, Marsh, et al. (2008), at the middle school level.

Congress mandated an evaluation of the Reading First Initiative. A report was prepared that examined the impact of three years of funding (\$1.0 billion-per-year) on 248 schools in 13 states. They included 17 school districts and one statewide program for a total of 18 sites (Gamse, et al., 2008). Specifically, the study investigated the impact of



Reading First on student reading achievement, classroom instruction, and the relationship between the degree of implementation of scientifically based reading instruction (SBRI) and student reading achievement. Student achievement was measured by using the *Reading Comprehension* subtest of the *Stanford Achievement Test-10 (SAT 10)* for students in grade one through three. First-grade students' reading achievement was measured in decoding. Reading instruction was evaluated from its direct observations and surveys were used to determine program implementation.

Key findings (Gamse, et al., 2008) included in grade one and two, positive and statistically significant impact on the amount of instructional time spent on the program's five essential components of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension); positive and statistically significant impacts on several practices promoted by the program; no statistically significant impact on reading comprehension test scores in grades one, two, or three; and positive and statistically significant impact on decoding for first grade students in one school year, spring 2007.

When Garet and colleagues examined the impact of coaching on the literacy growth of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, they found no growth. Researchers formed two groups of elementary teachers for a total of 270 students in 90 schools across six districts. Both groups attended a professional development institute, but only one group received coaching following the institute. The study looked at increase in knowledge of reading instruction, teacher observed instruction and student achievement. Teachers took a teacher knowledge pretest prior to implementation of any professional development, and student achievement scores were gathered prior to the start of the study. During implementation, teachers completed posttests and classrooms were observed.

Researchers collected student achievement data both during the spring of implementation and follow-up years. Results showed increases in knowledge of scientifically-based reading instruction and on one of three observed instructional practices, but not in student achievement for both groups.

Marsh, et al. (2008) used a comparative case study design and mixed methods to answer questions, those that sought to understand the role the Institute for Learning (IFL), played in supporting three districts in Florida with their existing reform efforts. Data was collected and analyzed from field interviews, focus groups, teacher and principal surveys, district and IFL documents, and student demographic and achievement databases. As part of the study's report, researchers considered the literacy achievement of middle school students in these three districts. Two of the three districts employed English Language Arts (ELA) coaches as part of their reform efforts. The specific nature and focus of the coaches' work varied across the districts. Of the two districts using coaching, one showed increases in students' scores and the other showed limited increases. Although teachers in the two districts with coaches reported that coaching was beneficial, researchers did not examine the effect of coaching on achievement.

***Early studies of impact of literacy coaching and teachers' knowledge and practices.***

Early research moved beyond descriptive overviews of the roles, responsibilities and qualifications of literacy coaches and considered the impact of literacy coaching on teachers' knowledge, practices and student achievement. However, like literacy coaching's impact on student achievement, a review of the research revealed mixed results for coaching's impact on teachers' knowledge and practices. Walpole, McKenna,

Uribe-Zarain, and Lamitina (2010) pointed to several studies that illustrated conflicting results of the impact of literacy coaching on teacher knowledge, instructional practices, and student achievement. For example, Walpole and her colleagues cited a study that concluded that coaching might not increase new teachers' use of effective practices (Roehrig, Bohn, Turner, & Pressley, 2008). A different study found that new teachers' perceived coaching to be an essential component of their induction program (Nielsen, Barry, & Addison, 2007). Roehrig, et al. conducted open-ended interviews and surveys with a purposeful sample of 10 teachers in Grades K-1, and Nielsen, et al. issued midyear and end-of-year surveys to a pool of 826 new elementary, secondary, and special education teachers; of these 468 surveys were completed and analyzed. Typically, Walpole, et al.'s studies discussed involved early childhood and elementary grades.

Hayes and Alvermann (1986) studied the relationship between discussions and high school students' critical reading behavior. They also examined the efficacy of coaching teachers on techniques for discussing readings they assigned. Participants included five teachers from a rural high school in Georgia and their classes of approximately 25 students each. Researchers observed each class a total of ten times throughout the school-year and, based on their observations, coached the teachers on ways to improve their performance in holding critical discussions about assigned class readings. The observations were video-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Coaching changed the practices of three of the five teachers investigated. The changes included increased teacher acknowledgement of student responses, increased proportion of text connected talk, and increased inferential and analytical talk.

***Recent studies of impact of literacy coaching on teachers' practices and/or***

***student achievement.***

Early descriptive studies looked at the different roles and responsibilities of coaches, including time spent and what time was spent on. Additionally, a range of studies considered the impact that literacy coaching in general had on teachers' knowledge, practices, and student achievement. However, little was learned about the specific strategies that coaches used. It is important to know what specifically coaches should do as well as how much and for how long in order to make desired teacher changes. In this vein, a review of recent literature revealed studies that considered the impact of specific strategies.

Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, and Zigmond (2010) investigated how and why 20 Reading First teachers used their time. Researchers considered teachers' responses to coaches and the relationships between time allocation of coaching activities and coaches' qualifications, teachers' perceptions and student achievement. Data collection included coaching time diaries, coach interviews, teacher questionnaires, and student achievement data. Using time diaries, coach participants recorded how they allocated their time and were interviewed in depth by telephone five times during a 2-3 week period. Bean, and her colleagues asked open-ended interview questions to uncover information about each coaching activity, including what and whom it involved, how much time was spent on it, and any problems or successes associated with it. Coaching activities were coded and grouped into five broad categories (teacher-group, teacher-individual, planning and organizing, management, school-related, and working with students) and reported in a table that detailed information about time and level of intensity spent for each of 17 activities.

The researchers found that coaches' use of time varied greatly. However, they noted that in schools where coaches spent more time working with teachers a greater percentage of students scored in the proficiency range and a smaller percentage in "at risk" category resulted. Teacher questionnaires provided data that said over 90% of teachers were positive about the work of their coaches.

Bean, and her colleagues drew several conclusions from their study. Among them, in order to understand fully the complexities involved in the work coaches perform, one must look beyond general categories for different types of coaches such as those assigned by researchers (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007) in an early study. Bean, et al. agreed with the work of other researchers, such as Hathaway and Risko (2007) and Rainville and Jones (2008), that coaching is situational, that how coaches allocate their time and assume leadership roles is greatly influenced by factors such as school and district context, teachers' natures, and coaches' beliefs about their roles. Additionally, Bean, et al. (2010) concluded that the primary focus of the coaches within their study appeared to be student learning and achievement. This requires a focus on students and not just on teachers. The researchers believed that such focus on students might be key to changing teachers' practices.

Another recent study has provided important information to help fill a gap in the literature on specific coaching practices. Walpole, et al. (2010) observed coaching and teaching in 116 high-poverty schools. They wished to understand the differences between them and learn whether or not specific aspects of coaching influenced certain teaching practices. Participants involved 123 coaches and 2,108 grade K-3 teachers across schools funded by Reading First in the state of Georgia. Observation protocols for

coaching and teaching were used and validated. The coaching protocol included 14 Likert-type survey items designed to be sensitive to three qualities central to the Georgia Reading First (GARF) coaching model. These included the ability of coaches to “collaborate with grade-level teams, coach for differentiation, and garner the support of their administration” (p. 123). The teaching protocol included a total of 40 original survey items. These were created to target five key characteristics of instruction, regardless of adopted commercial literacy program being used. These characteristics included teachers “ability to: collaborate with colleagues, apply general principles of effective instruction, apply principles of instruction to specific reading, manage individual children and groups, and conduct and interpret formative assessments” (p. 124).

Results included exploratory and confirmatory factors for coaching and teaching. The following exploratory and confirmatory factors for coaching were reported: collaboration with teachers, coaching for differentiation, and leadership support for coaching. Researchers noted the following exploratory factors for teaching: collaboration, small group management, effective reading instruction, read alouds, and assessment. Additionally, the researchers found different confirmatory factors for teachings, which included small group work, effective instruction, read alouds, and management. Walpole, and colleagues (2010) found that each coaching factor was an indicator for at least one teaching factor. However, they noted that differences existed between grade levels. For example, the findings showed that coaching for differentiation predicted small-group work at grade 2 and effective reading instruction at grade 1. The

researchers stated that relationships between coaching factors and teacher factors at each grade level were small, but significant.

In a related study, Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2010) explored how coaches allocated their time. Additionally, the researchers considered the relationship between coaching activities indicated on coaches' logs and increases in student achievement in grades K-1. Participants included coaches, teachers and students in grades K-1 from a district in Illinois that received Reading First funding. Data sources for the study were weekly coaching logs and student test scores from the fall and spring of one school year. Descriptive statistics, hierarchical linear modeling, and multiple linear regressions were used to determine the summary of coaching and assessment data at the teacher, grade, coach, and across-coach levels as well as the impact of coaching on student achievement.

Researchers found that coaches spent 53% of their time with teachers and 47% engaged in other tasks. In addition, study findings indicated that certain coaching activities predicted increases in student achievement, but they differed across grade levels. Other researchers noted the importance of this study because it correlated the amount of time coaches spent working with Reading First teachers in their classrooms to student achievement (Walker-Dalhouse, Risko, Lathrop, & Porter, 2010). Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2010) noted that study implications for coaching included the need to consider student achievement scores and teacher observations. These were important to identify teachers who need to improve a specific aspect of their literacy instruction. They believe such an intentional approach to literacy coaching could help improve teacher instruction and decrease high teacher variance related to student achievement gains.

***Literacy coaching models.***

A review of the literature revealed confusion around references to literacy coaching models. Toll (2009) cited Ruddell, Ruddell, and Singer (1994) as stating “A model is a representation of theories and concepts, not the enactment of a plan” (p. 66). Toll believed that practitioners have confused programs with models. She noted that we have many coaching programs that were assembled quickly and were not necessarily clearly tied to theories and concepts. As a result they did not constitute the equivalent of models for literacy coaching. The numbers and speed at which so many coaching programs formed in districts nationwide resulted in their mistakenly being referred to them as models of coaching, perhaps in the hope of generalizing about what is known about literacy coaching (Toll, 2009). She acknowledged that many were well-meaning programs; however, they needed a research-base as well as support from underlying theories and concepts to be classified as a model.

The literature review revealed that other models of coaching differ from literacy coaching. These include peer coaching (Joyce & Showers, 1982), Cognitive Coaching<sup>™</sup> (Costa & Garmston, 2002), and instructional coaching (Knight, 2007). In addition to confusing literacy coaching programs as models, the literature showed references to coaches and coaching used interchangeably across different models without regard to what differentiated one from another. This practice showed a lack of understanding as to why one model of coaching would be used verses another model.

The following were examples of ways in which literacy coaching models and approaches were discussed in the professional literature. Vogt and Shearer (2007) outlined six models and aligned them with descriptions of coaching roles. They included: informal coaching, mixed model-elements of informal and formal literacy coaching,



formal literacy coaching, peer coaching and mentoring, Cognitive Coaching™, and clinical supervision.

Sturtevant (2003) noted that effective literacy coaching models were “college or university programs that offer training which lead to master’s degrees or reading specialists certification; certification programs offered by agencies or states and collaborations between school district and colleges in which teachers receive preparation both in the college classroom and in the field-based sites” (p. 2). Moxley and Taylor (2006) described different forms of coaching in their book *Literacy Coaching: A Handbook for School Leaders* as: large-group professional development, small-group professional development (formal/informal approaches to both), modeling (considered formal), and one-on-one (could be either formal or informal). (pp. 14-16). Knight’s (2009) edited volume, *Coaching Approaches & Perspectives*, included nine chapters by leaders in the field of coaching who provided overviews to the following types of coaching: peer coaching, instructional coaching, Cognitive Coaching™, literacy coaching, content coaching, differentiated coaching, leadership coaching.

Other examples existed. The result was confusion about what constituted a model or approach and lack of a clearly defined literacy coaching model. Until recently, lack of research evidence existed in the professional literature for any clearly defined literacy coaching models (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010). However, with the absence of any clearly defined or research-based models, researchers provided guidelines for literacy coaching at different levels and made recommendations for selecting/examining any coaching program (Bean & Eisenberg, 2009; Toll, 2009). Bean and Eisenberg (2009) provided the following guidelines for coaching in middle and high schools:

- Choose carefully. Coach needs to be knowledgeable in literacy, content area(s), interpersonal skills, communication skills, and leadership skills. Coaching success begins with selecting a qualified coach.
- Coaching is a process-not an event. It takes time to generate support and credibility.
- Differentiate among coaching approaches.
- Support—and understanding—of administrators are critical.
- Evaluate the coaching initiative. Coaches can use the self-assessment tool for middle and high school coaches released by IRA with support from the Carnegie Corporation.
- Establish a means of networking for coaches to share, discuss, brainstorm, problem-solve.
- Spread the word about the value and merit of coaching. (p. 121-122).

Toll (2009) suggested the following guidelines for selecting/examining coaching programs at any level:

- Check the alignment between recommended coaching practices and research on adult learners.
- Check for clarity in coach's role and ensure they support actual coaching.
- Consider the potential for capacity building. Make sure the coaching will support teachers in thinking more deeply about their instructional practices.
- Make sure the program is evaluated using multiple sources of evidence. (p. 67).

Of promise are recent studies that examined the impact of coaching on teachers' practices and student achievement, these also included intensive training for coaches and

well defined coaching models. One such study looked at the impact of the Literacy Collaborative (LC), a reform model, and its use of coaching to increase the literacy learning of students in grades K-2 (Biancarosa, et al., 2010). According to Biancarosa and colleagues, LC utilized literacy coaching as a primary means of improving elementary reading, writing, and language skills. The researchers conducted a 4-year longitudinal study on the impact of LC on student achievement of kindergarten through second-grade students.

Study participants involved approximately 8,576 students from 17 schools across eight eastern states in the United States. Student participants were administered DIBELS and Terra Nova twice annually throughout the study. Scores from the first year before any coaching occurred were used to establish a baseline against which growth was measured in the remaining three years of LC implementation. Coaches were trained during the first year of the study and did not perform professional development activities with the approximately 287 teachers involved in the study until years two through four.

Biancarosa and colleagues found a significant increase in student literacy achievement as a result of Literacy Collaborative implementation. Gains occurred in the first year and then size increased with each subsequent year of LC implementation, resulting in standard effect sizes of .22, .37, and .43 for years 1, 2, and 3 respectively. The researchers noted their greater gains to those of the Marsh, et al. (2008) study; as its improved literacy was slight. Biancarosa, et al. (2010) suggested that the use of extensive, yearlong training of coaches and a coaching model - - one (organized around a well articulated “literacy instructional system that includes a repertoire of instructional practices” (p. 28) ) - - may have contributed to student gains. The researchers noted that

neither of these factors were present in two earlier studies that studied the impact of coaching on student achievement (Garet, et al, 2008; Marsh, et al., 2008). However, the researchers acknowledged that insufficient studies existed on models of coaching and/or the impact of coaching expertise on teachers and students to verify this. Additionally, the researchers noted that increasing effect sizes might be attributed to increases over time in the development and expertise of the coaches involved in the LC Collaborative. They point to two studies conducted by Gibson (2005, 2006) that have informed the development of coaching knowledge and the practices of an expert coach. These case studies confirm that coaching is complex, it takes time to develop the knowledge and skills of an expert coach (Biancarosa, et al., 2010).

In addition to the lack of both well developed models of literacy coaching and adequate training for coaches in early studies, the literature revealed that they treated literacy coaching uniformly and did not adequately evaluate the impact of literacy coaching separate from other forms of professional development (Neuman & Wright, 2010). Recent research not only included examples that considered the impact of coaching separate from other forms of professional development (Neuman & Wright, 2010), but it also included studies conducted at various grade levels. The authors investigated the impact of literacy coaching on teachers' practices and student achievement and involved well developed models and/or adequate training for coaches (Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & DiPrima Bickel, 2010; Lovett, et al., 2008; Sailors & Price, 2010).

Neuman and Wright's (2010) study of the impact of professional development included coursework and on-site coaching on the literacy knowledge and practices of pre-

K teachers. According to the researchers, this study built upon an earlier one that examined the relationships between different forms of professional development and changes in early childhood teachers' knowledge and literacy practices (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). The earlier study found that professional development and coaching contribute to increases in teachers' skills and practices, but unlike the more recent study (Neuman & Wright, 2010), it was unable to separate the effects of coaching from coursework.

Participants included 149 early childhood educators in schools and community centers serving low-income students across six Midwestern cities. The participants were randomly assigned to three groups, each of which received one of the following treatments: (1) three-credit course in early language and literacy at a local community college, (2) on-site one-on-one coaching, or (3) no professional development. According to the researchers, the three-credit course was intended to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills required for quality early childhood language and literacy learning. They reported that the course met weekly for 3 hours over a 10-week period. Additionally, the researchers noted they insured fidelity to course implementation such as weekly conference calls with the instructors and collection of completed assignments.

The coaching model was designed to help teachers apply research-based strategies to improve early language and literacy student outcomes, and it emphasized elements such as reflection and use of modeling and demonstration (Neuman & Wright, 2010). In the weekly coaching for 3 hours over a 10-week period, the researchers indicated that coaches had access to the course syllabus and were encouraged to tailor the content to meet individual teachers' needs. According to Neuman and Wright (2010), fidelity to

coaching measures were put in place, they used coaching logs, and they held weekly coaching debriefing sessions with instructional coordinators.

Teacher knowledge of early language and literacy development was measured using a pre and post-tests designed by the researchers. The *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation, ELLCO* (Smith & Dickinson, 2002), which includes a literacy environment checklist, an observational ratings rubric, and a literacy activities rating scale, was used prior to the start of any professional development, and it was used immediately following the intervention and five months after the end of the intervention to measure changes in teacher practice and the longer-term impact on practice.

Neuman and Wright used a random sample of 54 participants, selected from the coursework and coaching groups and interviewed using 12 open-ended questions to better understand teachers' response to the professional development in which they participated. The researchers found that knowledge did not significantly increase for both groups, but they noted that teachers who received coaching made gains in their practices, especially in the area related to literacy environment.

According to the authors, this study is important for two reasons. First, it is among the first randomized, controlled studies that investigated the impact of different types of professional development on early childhood teachers' language and literacy knowledge and practice. Second, it successfully confirmed the benefits of coaching by considering it separately from coursework. The researchers acknowledged that further studies are needed to determine more about the dosage and duration of coaching needed to bring about intended results as findings from this research related to language and

literacy practices were more modest when compared to an earlier study conducted by Neuman and Cunningham (2009).

Additionally, VanKeer and Verhaeghe (2005) studied two professional development models, one that included coaching for second and fifth grade teachers. According to study results, both models proved to be equally effective in improving student literacy achievement and self-efficacy. However, the researchers noted that the amount of time involved in the two models (inservice course versus coaching) varied. Specifically, participants spent approximately 13 hours in an inservice course or 35 hours of ongoing coaching. This study raises questions about length and dose of coaching interventions.

Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, and DiPrima Bickel (2010) considered the impact of a comprehensive literacy coaching program on teacher practice and learning in elementary schools with high teacher mobility. The researchers noted that the coaching program, Content Focused Coaching (CFC), was originally designed for use with mathematics teachers, but the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning (IFL) later adapted it for use with literacy. According to the researchers, throughout the study, CFC coaches, principals, and district leaders participated in 3 days of professional development a month. They did so to increase their knowledge of comprehension instruction, to improve skills for working with teachers using their literacy practices, and to achieve better ways for building school environments that support coaching.

The authors noted that when planning and practicing lessons with leaders the professional development sessions emphasized the role of classroom talk in supporting comprehension and incorporated techniques from professional texts, such as *Questioning*

*the Author* (Beck & McKeown, 2006; Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997). The study indicated that CFC coaches also engaged in observing master IFL coaches work with teachers. They had the opportunity to be observed and receive feedback on their own coaching as part of their training. According to the researchers, CFC coaches were expected to meet with teachers weekly in grade-level meetings to study underlying theories that supported effective comprehension instruction and plan Questioning the Author lessons. Additionally the researchers noted, CFC coaches were expected to meet with individual teachers once a month to engage in a cycle of planning, enacting, and reflecting on Questioning the Author lessons.

Thirty-two elementary schools were randomly assigned as treatment and comparison sites in the study. The researchers indicated that district leaders worked with IFL to select and hire 15 CFC coaches for the treatment sites. Moreover, 10 coaches were either already working or were recruited to work in the comparison sites. According to the authors, coaches in the two groups did not vary significantly on measures of education or experience. Initially, 193 fourth- and fifth-grade teachers participated in the study and were assigned to two cohorts. During the first year a total of 16 teachers left and during the second year researchers recruited 73 teachers to replace them. The study was specifically interested in the effects of the CFC program on the 73 replacement teachers. This is important because as the authors noted, high teacher turnover is recognized as a big challenge to many instructional reform programs. Researchers aimed to distribute the replacement teachers among cohorts as evenly as possible in regards to grade-level assignments and years of teaching experience.



Matsumura, et al. reported that data sources were many. They included teacher surveys, records of frequency of teacher participation in coaching, records of teachers' perceptions of the content emphasized in coaching activities, teachers' self-reported frequency of 11 different activities related to reading comprehension instruction, classroom observations, and student achievement data from the *Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills* (TAKS) and *Degrees of Reading Power Assessment* (DRP).

Hierarchical linear growth models (HLM) were used to analyze the effect of school participation in the CFC program on student achievement. The researchers found an increase in the amount of coaching participation, self-report of classroom text discussion and observed teacher quality for 73 teachers who replaced teacher turnover. Additionally, study findings noted that CFC predicted slightly higher gains on state assessments for participating schools. The authors concluded that more research is needed to learn how coaching programs can support continued student achievement growth in schools with high teacher mobility, a problem facing many low-income districts.

The literature reviewed yielded a limited number of studies that considered the impact of coaching on teachers' practices and student achievement. Of those identified, an even smaller number involved teachers in middle and high schools. Sailors and Price (2010) studied the impact of coaching on improving comprehension instruction in elementary and middle schools. Results suggested coaching can support teacher instruction. Lovett et al. (2008) considered the effects of coaching on preparing high school teachers working with students with disabilities. Students showed greater gains in classrooms in which teachers had coaching.

Sailors and Price (2010) studied two models of professional development designed to help elementary and middle school teachers improve their practices and improve the literacy achievement of their students. Specifically, according to the study, both models of professional development intended to train teachers to teach their students cognitive reading strategies. One model involved a traditional two-day workshop and the second model involved the same two-day workshop plus classroom-based literacy coaching. According to the authors, one of two highly qualified persons coached participants an average of 329 minutes during the year. The study noted that 62% percent of the coaching was classroom based and involved demonstration lessons (50%), co-teaching (25%), and reflective feedback (25%). The other 38% involved guided conversations.

Participants included 44 teachers in grades 2-8 from three school districts in low-income communities. As indicated by the study, not only did participants represent multiple grade-levels, but they taught a variety of subject areas (37% all subjects; 21% reading; 20% social studies; 13% English/language arts; 9% science). Data sources included: *Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation*, GRADE (American Guidance Services, 2001), a reading achievement measure; *Comprehension Instruction Observation Protocol System*, CIOPS (Sailors, 2006), a measure of implementation of the professional development content, and; reports that included descriptive information about the date, time, nature, and comprehension strategy focus of each interaction.

A random-effects, multilevel, pretest-posttest comparison group design and a multilevel modeling analytic strategy were used to measure the effects of the two professional development models. In all of the teacher observation and student

achievement measurements teachers who received coaching outperformed the teachers who only received the two-day workshop. According to Sailors and Price, this is important. They suggested that coaching might be useful support for teachers in grades two through eight. It should be combined with comprehension instruction in subject areas, and the combination has been a challenge to accomplish.

Additionally, Sailors and Price indicated that this study is unique. They insisted that previous studies have not looked specifically at coaching and implementation of comprehension strategies in this same way. However, unlike Neuman's and Wright's (2010) study, Sailors and Price did not conclude that their study's coaching design was responsible for changes in practices and student achievement outcomes. The researchers acknowledged that further research that investigates the causal study of coaching and teacher practices is needed.

Other researchers considered the usefulness of coaching in preparing high school teachers who work with students with reading disabilities. Lovett, et al. (2008) designed a professional development program to train them to teach a remedial reading program called PHAST PACES. This reading program focused on improving decoding, reading rate, and comprehension skills of adolescent with reading disabilities. The professional development model designed to train teachers to teach PHAST PACES included instructional coaching, long-term mentorship, and collaborative learning features such as small teacher study groups. The authors noted that it emphasized development of metacognitive and reflective teaching styles as well as effective instruction of comprehension and decoding skills.

Teachers participated in eight-ten days of in-service combined with onsite, in-classroom coaching. The study indicated that the first eight days of in-service training occurred during the summer and first semester of teaching. Additionally, they stated that the remaining two days of training occurred at the beginning of the second semester of teaching. Lovett and colleagues noted that coaching was spread out with three visits occurring in the first month of teaching and approximately two visits per month for each month throughout the teaching year.

Nine of the 23 teachers who participated in PHAST PACES training completed a post-training questionnaire that included open-ended and rating-format questions designed to gather feedback about the professional development model (Lovett et al., 2008). Teachers responded positively about the training program, including use of coaching, and they indicated that their knowledge base for teaching reading to adolescents with reading disabilities increased as well as their sense of efficacy for changing student performance and implementing the PHAST PACES program. Additionally, teachers reported that the training impacted their teaching style.

The authors also examined pre and post achievement scores of students who were taught 60-70 hours of the intervention by participating teachers. They analyzed student outcomes from subtests (passage comprehension, word attack, and word identification) of the *Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised* (WRMT-R) and experimental measures of word reading (Challenge Test). Specifically, student outcomes were compared for teachers' first and subsequent instructional groups. In teachers' subsequent instructional groups, pupils showed greater gains. This suggested that professional development which included coaching contributed to better outcomes. Like other previously discussed

studies (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Sailors & Price, 2010), the authors concluded that additional research is necessary to confirm that coaching is responsible for student gains.

***Impact of statewide literacy coaching initiatives.***

A review of the literature revealed three large-scale initiatives. They included middle and high school literacy coaching and K-12 district initiatives. The latter was previously discussed in the section about *Early Descriptive Studies – Districts & Programs*. Specifically, these three initiatives were statewide in their scope, involved middle and high school literacy coaches, and included: (a) Alabama Reading Initiative K-12 (Salinger & Bacevich, 2006), (b) Kentucky Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project 4-12 (Kannapel, 2007, 2008; Kannapel & Moore, 2009; Kannapel, Moore, Coe, & Hibpsman, 2008), and (c) the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (Brown, Reumann-Moore, Hugh, du Plessis, & Christman, 2006; Brown, Reumann-Moore, Hugh, Christman, Riffer, du Plessis, et al., 2007; Brown, Reumann-Moore, Hugh, Christman, & Riffer, 2008). Bean and Eisenberg (2009) discussed each of these statewide secondary initiatives as well as Boston’s Collaborative Coaching and Learning and America’s Choice and summarized the research findings as they pertain to secondary literacy coaching. Based on the study findings, Bean and Eisenberg noted that teachers valued coaching as a form of professional development, highly qualified coaches or “gold standard” (Frost & Bean, 2006) coaches were needed, and challenges existed that needed to be addressed. These include coaching within the context of middle and high schools, how coaches negotiate their relationships with teachers upon changing from teacher to

coach; and how to research student achievement. The next section looks more closely at each of the secondary initiatives in Alabama, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania.

*Alabama.*

The Carnegie Corporation commissioned a descriptive study (Salinger & Bacevich, 2006) of the secondary component of the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI). It wished to learn more about the statewide initiative in middle and high schools. Specifically, the study sought to understand what worked and what did not with secondary teachers as they implemented ARI. It also sought to learn how the initiative continued to be sustained despite minimal state funding (Salinger, 2007). Researchers interviewed over 100 teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. They conducted student focus groups at individual school sites, and they persuaded approximately 1,200 middle and high school teachers to complete surveys.

Salinger and Bacevich (2006) identified key elements of ARI in their report. The elements included school commitment to 100% student literacy rate, minimum of 85% faculty commitment to participation in a two-week intensive summer reading institute and ongoing professional development during the school year, assignment of two, full-time reading coaches to work with teachers and students, collaborative university faculty partnership designed to mentor, support, and assist with problem-solving, and local business partnerships.

Interview data revealed positive outcomes for teachers and students as a result of ARI. Teachers reported changes in how they thought about teaching and actually approached instructing struggling readers. They also reported more collaboration across content areas and shared efforts to help students read and learn. Researchers did not

examine quantitative indicators to measure students' reading achievement. However, existing data did reveal positive changes in students' reading behavior, engagement, and confidence as a result of ARI.

Salinger and Bacevich noted four key findings from the ARI. First, the researchers found one size approach did not work and that it was important to be responsive to different needs of K-12 students and schools. Second, they noted developing partnerships involving all stakeholders was important in order to develop a cohesive K-12 continuum for reading instruction. Third, Salinger and Bacevich stated secondary schools needed support of specialized staff that understood adolescent learners and secondary contexts. Fourth, the researchers found it was important to stay on top of local, state, and national policy related to reading in an effort to identify possible funding sources to support statewide literacy efforts.

The researchers also made recommendations for sustainability for ARI and other similar secondary initiatives. Salinger and Bacevich suggested models needed to be flexible enough for teachers to adapt to their instructional and students' needs. In addition, the researchers noted comprehension should be at the forefront of any secondary initiative. They also suggested that procedures for identifying and diagnosing at-risk students' needs and intervention programs for students with the severest difficulties are needed at the secondary level. Finally, Salinger and Bacevich suggested that creative use of funds and tireless efforts to secure external funding are necessary to support secondary initiatives.

*Kentucky.*

In 2005, the Kentucky General Assembly enacted legislation to train 20 coaches at eight sites across the state each year for four years for a total of approximately 500 coaches. These mentors were prepared to help teachers in Grades 4-12 incorporate literacy instruction into their classrooms (Kannapel, 2008). The Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project (ALCP) was funded for four years. However, only 48 coaches actually participated and because of budget cuts the program only lasted two years. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) partnered with faculty from eight universities across the state to train and support coaches. The International Reading Association's *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (2006) was used for training that included having coaches attend an intensive, eight-day, summer institute, a two-day content literacy professional development session, and monthly professional development sessions throughout the year. Coaches received 6 hours of graduate credit for each year of participation in the ALCP for a total of 12 graduate hours.

Several reports (Kannapel, 2007, 2008; Kannapel & Moore, 2009; Kannapel, Moore, Coe & Hibpsman, 2008) were published in order to share lessons learned from Kentucky's statewide efforts. An evaluation of the first year of the initiative was prepared. Research sought to learn a variety of things about the first year of ALCP. For example, researchers considered how were coaches selected, prepared and supported? In addition, researchers sought to understand what were the roles and responsibilities of coaches and how they aligned with the IRA (2006) framework. Furthermore, researchers studied the impact of ALCP on teachers' practices and on their students, what helped and hindered the work of coaches, and how did the literacy environment and test scores compare in schools with coaches versus schools without coaches?



Researchers gathered data to answer these questions by conducting the following: interviews with almost every participating coach as well as a sample of principals, site visits to six ALCP schools, reviews of related documents and web sources, and surveys of teachers in grades 4-12 in both ALCP schools and non-ALCP schools. Six major study findings were found and discussed within the first year report prepared by Kannapel. First, Kannapel noted that only three coaches had to compete to participate in ALCP. All others were selected by their principal or district administrator. Second, the researcher found training was effective in preparing coaches to support teachers with planning, mentoring, and coaching around instructional strategies that could be used in their classrooms. Third, she found coaches primarily stayed within the parameters of the ALCP model and worked with teachers in Grades 4-12. Kannapel noted that the majority of their time was spent engaged in activities that aligned with IRA's (2006) *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* such as modeling lessons, helping teachers select instructional materials, providing professional development, and assisting teachers with analyzing assessment data. Fourth, Kannapel found the training and ongoing support provided by ALCP helped coaches most with their work. However, she noted lack of time, lack of funding to support a coaching position, lack of district understanding about the role of coach, and assignment to more than one school created the biggest barriers to coaches' work. Fifth, the researcher found teachers self-reported implementing many new strategies as a result of working with coaches. Kannapel also noted teachers reported improvements in students' classroom performance, enthusiasm for reading, use of variety of reading strategies, and school-based assessments. Sixth, the researcher noted survey results indicated more signs of a positive literacy environment in

ALCP schools compared with non-ALCP schools such as more teachers involved in literacy-related professional development, greater use of a variety of literacy strategies in content areas, and more.

Year Two Evaluation of ALCP (Kannapel, et al., 2008) sought to answer similar research questions as the first year's study and reported major findings according to the following four categories: Coaches' Training and Support, Coaches' Work in Schools, Facilitators and Barriers to Coaches' Work, and Impact of the Coaches' Work. Data were gathered through observations of trainings, interviews with teachers, coaches, principals, and ALCP staff and directors, site visits to ALCP schools, and surveys of teachers in ALCP schools and non-ALCP schools. Kannapel and her colleagues found four major findings.

According to the researchers, the four major findings included: (a) ALCP design was solid and coaches were effectively prepared to take best practices in literacy instruction into the classroom; (b) Coaches spent the majority of their time working to influence literacy instruction in classrooms. Teachers reported valuing individualized coaching activities the most; (c) ALCP training, thoughtful selection of coaches who were respected by peers, and administrative support was most helpful to coaches' work. Multiple school assignments and/or job descriptions, lack of time to coach all teachers, and lack of administrative support were reported the main barriers to coaches' work. Lack of funding for coach positions was the biggest obstacle to widespread participation; and (d) According to self-report and anecdotal information, the biggest impact of ALCP had been on teachers' attitudes and practices as well as students' behaviors, attitudes, and

learning. However, state assessments did not show a significant difference in achievement gains for students in ALCP versus non-ALCP schools.

An evaluation report for the third year of ALCP (Kannapel & Moore, 2009) was prepared. It focused on the work of persons in the first cadre of ALCP who had been coaching in schools for three years at the time of the study, a work that sought to understand five questions. First, what coaching models were stressed by ALCP and to what extent were they being implemented? Second, after three years of coaching, what was the impact of ALCP coaches on teacher practice and student behavior, attitudes, and learning? Third, what factors helped or hindered coaches' influence? Fourth, what aspects of the coaching model were sustained in ALCP schools? Fifth, what impact did ALCP have on coaches who completed the program?

Site visits, teacher questionnaires and interviews with administrators, coaches, and teachers were conducted. Kannapel and Moore found five major findings. First, according to the researchers the majority of sites were implementing ALCP Model as designed, which included among other aspects, coaches spending most of their time working directly with teachers. Second, Kannapel and Moore noted coaches had a positive impact on teacher practice including, but not limited to, increased use of content literacy strategies, formative assessment strategies, and materials they provided. Third, the researchers found coaches had a positive impact on student performance in the classroom, formative assessments, and attitudes about literacy and their motivation to read and write. However, they noted statistical analysis of state assessments found no significant differences in the performances of students in ALCP schools versus non-ALCP schools. Fourth, Kannapel and Moore found several factors supported coaches'

influence including district support and funding, coaches' competence, and principal support. However, they also found other factors hindered coaches' influence, such as multiple school assignments, budget shortfalls, and weak building leadership. Fifth, the study concluded ALCP impacted coaches by developing "literacy experts" who reported becoming more interested in continuing their own professional development and increased leadership responsibilities as a result of their participation. Sixth, the researchers determined it was uncertain whether literacy practices introduced through ALCP would be sustainable in buildings that no longer had a coach or in buildings with new coaches who did not receive the same training and support of ALCP participants. The researchers found buildings appeared able to maintain literacy practices with coaches who participated in ALCP and were still serving in such capacities. However, according to the study only 55% of ALCP participants continued to provide literacy coaching in some capacity.

*Pennsylvania.*

In 2004, the Annenberg Foundation partnered with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and developed the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI). It did so in an effort to support reform of teaching and instructional practice statewide (Medrich, 2009). PAHSCI provided one literacy and one math coach to each of 26 high schools in 16 high-need districts. Its emphasis included high schools, evidence-based literacy strategies, one-on-one coaching and professional development for teachers, and mentoring for coaches and school leaders.

According to Medrich, PAHSCI adopted a literacy framework developed by the Pennsylvania Literacy Network (PLN) as the cornerstone and focus of its coaching. The

PLN framework provided broad principles for content literacy instruction at the high school level, the result was lively, active classrooms, more student-centered than teacher-centered. He noted that implementation of and fidelity to the PLN framework was essential to the outcomes of PAHSCI. He also observed that PAHSCI was a combination of the PLN framework and one-on-one coaching. PLN prepared research reports for the first three years of PAHSCI (Brown, Reumann-Moore, Hugh, du Plessis, & Christman, 2006; Brown, et al., 2007; Brown, Reumann-Moore, Hugh, Christman, & Riffer, 2008) and a summary of the research findings (Medrich, 2009).

According to Brown and her colleagues (2006), the first year's report is concerned with PAHSCI's organization and implementation. Specifically, the report described the roles of the various partner organizations involved in PAHSCI. These encompassed hiring and training of coaches, initial implementation, successes and challenges, findings regarding impact on classroom teaching, student engagement, school and district culture and capacity, and recommendations for Year Two. Data collected during the first year included site visits, observations of meeting and trainings, surveys, questionnaires, and interviews with teachers, coaches, and administrators.

Brown and her colleagues' study noted four major findings. First, they found coaches spent a fair amount of energy and time during the first year of the initiative defining their roles and establishing trusting relationships with teachers and administrators. As a result, they faced several challenges that needed to be addressed in order for them to be successful helping teachers. Second, the researchers noted professional development sessions and coaching helped new and veteran teachers expand their repertoire of instructional practices, encouraged use of new strategies, and promoted

collaboration to improve instruction. Third, Brown and colleagues found initial student reactions to PLN strategies were positive. Finally, the researchers found implementation of PAHSCI had an impact on culture and capacity. For example, they noted professional development became a priority for schools; a more instruction-focused, collaborative culture took shape; and teachers became more open to trying new instructional strategies.

In a second year report, Brown and colleagues (2007) described ways in which PAHSCI was making its intended impact throughout six sections. According to the researchers, the second year's report was primarily concerned with analysis of PAHSCI's theory of change, how coaches and mentors performed their roles, the impact of coaching on teachers and teacher practice, and student outcomes related to implementation of PAHSCI. Brown and colleagues noted that the theory of change involved the belief that specific building and classroom-level outcomes would lead to improved student achievement. According to the Year Two report, intended building-level outcomes included: leadership development, strengthened professional development, and ownership of PAHSCI. In addition, the report stated that intended classroom-level outcomes were literacy-rich, student-centered curriculum, actively engaged students, and teachers skilled at research-based instructional strategies.

In the first section of the report, researchers described the overall design of PAHSCI and the intended impact. The researchers noted that progress was made in both building and classroom-level outcomes. Section Two detailed ways in which teachers worked with coaches to use new instructional practices. Observations, interviews, and survey data indicated that individuals involved in multiple aspects of PAHSCI had the greatest understanding of PLN strategies. Data revealed that writing was being woven

into instruction; teachers were scaffolding strategy instruction; more strategic grouping was being used; teachers were teaching, assessing, and reteaching, and students were more engaged. The third part of the report described coaches work with teachers as well as what benefitted and what burdened their work. For example, the researchers noted that it helped when coaches followed up with teachers who attended PLN courses and it hindered coaches' work when they did not have a clear understanding of their role. Professional development sites involved with PAHSCI and their impact were described in the fourth section. Section Five included the perspectives of a sampling of PAHSCI stakeholders such as administrators, mentors, coaches, teachers, PLN instructors and facilitators. They observed that no one questioned the value of the work of PAHSCI and all expressed commitment to building upon and sustaining the work of the initiative. Finally, in the sixth section, researchers outlined lessons learned from the first two years and made recommendations for Year Three.

The authors shifted data collection in the third year from questionnaires and surveys to observations and interviews in a third study conducted by Brown and her colleagues (Brown, et al., 2008). They conducted a total of 102 classroom observations in 9 schools and interviewed 109 teachers and the 31 coaches who worked with them (Brown et al., 2008). Their report was divided into six sections. Section One reviewed PAHSCI's vision, goals, design, and related theory of change. Two described the evolution of the coach's role over three years, including challenges and ways in which the initiative and coaches responded. Three described how teachers' practices connected to student engagement and learning within the classroom. Four identified aspects of the PAHSCI model that supported instruction change. Five focused on the various roles that

different individuals and organizations played and how they linked to and sustained PAHSCI learning and leadership. Lastly, Six provided a model for the implementation of PAHSCI and lessons learned from the initiative.

Major findings of this 2008 study included the following six lessons learned from PAHSCI are discussed in the last section: (a) Its plan was a huge and complex undertaking. (b) Coaching required a complex set of skill, talents, and abilities for working within specific school and district context. (c) The PLN framework was applicable across content areas. (d) Factors that helped and hindered sustainability were identifiable. (e) Stakeholders utilized a variety of strategies to deal with contextual challenges and diverse needs. (f) Stronger professional communities and leadership opportunities resulted at multiple levels and within various organizations as a result of PAHSCI.

In addition to Brown and her colleagues, Medrich (2009) conducted a study of PAHSCI. He found that teachers who were coached regularly better understood and used more PLN strategies, addressed individual students' needs, understood the objectives of PAHSCI, participated in more professional development opportunities, felt the quality of their instruction had improved, and were able to apply what they learned.

*South Carolina Reading Initiative.*

Another statewide model of interest to the present study is the research of Stephens et al. (2007) on the South Carolina Reading Initiative (SCRI). Although the study involved Grades K-5, it is of interest to the present study. The SCRI's initiative eventually expanded to middle and high school grades and it influenced the present study.



Stephens and colleagues conducted a series of studies that are all reported in this 2007 paper in order to determine the impact of the South Carolina Reading Initiative (SCRI) on teachers' beliefs and practices as well as the reading achievement of students in the classrooms of SCRI teachers versus students of non-SCRI teachers. SCRI, a three-year collaborative effort between the South Carolina State Department of Education (SDE) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), involved coaches, teachers, and students in grades K-5.

According to Stephens, et al. (2007), literacy coaches in SCRI were engaged in professional development involving 27 hours of graduate coursework, over 3 weeks each summer and one day a month during the school years. Additionally, regional coaches both made monthly onsite visits to support coaches and held monthly regional study groups. Coaches were provided with article packets and participant notebooks. These contained professional articles and instructional strategies they studied and used with teachers they coached. Coaches were expected to hold bimonthly study groups with their teachers and principals as well as spend 4 days a week in teachers' classrooms helping them practice what they were learning.

Surveys and case studies were conducted to understand the impact of SCRI. Specifically, information from three forms of surveys were used to gather information about their beliefs and practices. The forms included the *Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile* (TORP) (DeFord, 1985), the *South Carolina Reading Profile* (2000), and a survey developed by the South Carolina State Department of Education (SDE). The researchers observed a representative sample of 41 teachers of the 1,800 participants, and interviewed them two to three times during Years 1 and 2 of the study.

Survey and case study findings indicated that coached teachers more consistently followed best practices. Additionally, student achievement and quantitative data, collected each year of three years students in SCRI and non-SCRI classrooms indicated that: (a) struggling readers in 1<sup>st</sup> grade increased text reading level after three years in SCRI classroom, (b) in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they outperformed peers who did not spend three year in SCRI classroom, and (c) the number of students on IEPs was cut in half. According to the researchers, this study demonstrated that research-based, statewide professional development can impact teachers' beliefs and practices as well as the literacy achievement of their students.

### ***Teachers' perceptions of coaching.***

Studies that consider teachers' perceptions of coaching are important work. Insufficient research exists about teachers' beliefs and/or their perceptions of their professional development. It is important to know more about their views on literacy coaching. If researchers and professional developers are going to successfully design, facilitate, and study coaching initiatives they must investigate teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Doing so will enhance student achievement. The present study considers the impact of a literacy coaching initiative on teachers' general and personal sense of efficacy of literacy teaching through the point of view of the participants. Vanderburg and Stephens (2010) reviewed coaching practices teachers found to be most helpful. Researchers analyzed interviews of 35 of 39 teachers who participated in a statewide literacy initiative that included attending bi-monthly study groups and weekly coaching. These 35 were a representative sample of 1,633 teachers who were involved in an earlier study of the same statewide literacy initiative conducted by Stephens, et al.

(2007). In the current study (Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010), researchers wished to learn what coaches did that teachers found helpful and specific changes in their teaching they attribute to their work with coaches. The researchers analyzed interview data from the earlier study (Stephens, et al., 2007) in which teachers spontaneously spoke about their coaches without directly being asked. Then, researchers conducted a negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to disprove any patterns that had emerged from the interview data. Their analysis did not find any comments that were critical of coaches' actions or what was learned from the coaches. Teachers perceived the following actions of their coaches to be valuable: (a) creating opportunities for collaboration, (b) providing ongoing support, and (c) teaching research-based instructional strategies. Teachers reported that coaches helped them: (a) try new practices, (b) use more authentic assessment, (c) be grounded in professional literature, and (d) create student-center curriculum. This study is important because it provides descriptions from teachers' perspective of what coaches actually do and specifically how their actions impacted their beliefs and practices, rather than argue, in general, for use of coaches and describe what coaching ought to look like.

### **Summary**

The literature review provided support for the present study. First, the present study is focused on literacy teaching of middle and high school content teachers. Today's dismal reading achievement of adolescents is of great concern to educators, politicians, policy makers, and the public. Much attention is focused on how to improve instruction to resolve the large number of low performing adolescents. The literature review illustrated that literacy teaching, including comprehension strategies, has the

potential to increase student achievement. Second, the literature review revealed that teachers have resisted content literacy instruction for decades and that teachers' beliefs, including their efficacy beliefs, have been identified as a barrier to full implementation. Teachers' efficacy beliefs are investigated in the present study. Third, the review established the power of teachers' beliefs, including efficacy beliefs, as they relate to instructional and assessment decisions as well as student behaviors and achievement. Not enough research exists to adequately know how middle and high school teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching develop and change. Teachers in the present study participated in a nine-month collaborative literacy coaching initiative, which provided ongoing support as they worked to increase, enhance, or change instructional beliefs and practices, including their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Fourth, the literature review identified the promise of literacy coaching to increase, enhance, or change teachers' beliefs and practices in order to better support students' literacy learning and achievement. However, voids in the research exist, especially in the area of middle and high school literacy coaching. More needs to be known about this promising practice that aligns with the components of high quality, effective professional development. The present study incorporated the use of literacy coaching with middle and high school teachers and studied its impact in order to learn more and contribute to the growing body of research related to teacher efficacy for literacy teaching and literacy coaching.

The following chapter provides details about my study, including specifics related to the research methodology I used to investigate changes to and the collaborative literacy coaching's impact on teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

In this emic qualitative case study, I examined what impact a nine-month collaborative literacy coaching initiative had on middle and high school content teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Specifically, the research questions that guided my study are as follows:

1. Do middle and high school content teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching change as a result of participation in a nine month collaborative literacy coaching initiative, and if so how?
2. What aspects of this nine month collaborative literacy coaching initiative contributed to middle and high school content teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching?

This study contributes to the literature on middle and high school literacy coaching and the research on the impact of coaching on content area teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy instruction. There is a definite need to know more about both of these areas. Literacy coaching offers a path for addressing teachers' resistance to content literacy by providing them with support to implement literacy strategies, which can translate into much needed help for struggling adolescents. Historically, teachers have identified beliefs, including lack of confidence for literacy teaching, as contributing to their resistance to implementing content literacy (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995). Additionally, since teachers' sense of efficacy has been associated with student achievement, it is important for more studies to explore the

relationship between the construct of efficacy and professional development efforts such as literacy coaching and seek to understand how literacy coaching can successfully support teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching so that they overcome their resistance to implementation.

This study utilized qualitative research methodology in order to understand the impact of this collaborative literacy coaching initiative through the perspectives of the participants. Transcripts of weekly collaborative literacy coaching cadres, individual interviews, and initial and follow-up questionnaires allowed teachers to describe in their own words how, if at all, the literacy coaching initiative impacted their sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. This approach is preferable to quantitative methods that have the potential to silence participants' viewpoints as well as impose the worldviews and biases of the researcher.

This study is bounded by a collaborative literacy coaching professional development initiative that was implemented over nine months in a rural, midwestern, public, school district. Specifically, the study focused on changes in middle and high school content area teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching as part of a literacy coaching professional development initiative designed to support teachers in becoming more reflective and empowered around their literacy teaching and their students' literacy learning.

The following section describes the methodology used in this study, including information on (a) qualitative and case study methodology, (b) selection and introduction of participants, (c) context of the study, (d) data collection

methods, and (e) methods of data analysis, and (f) validity, trustworthiness & limitations.

### **Qualitative and Case Study Methodology**

Qualitative research is an interpretive form of research that seeks to understand the meaning that participants have constructed; or, according to Merriam (2001), how they make sense of their world and their experiences in that world. A qualitative approach was used in this study in order to understand and describe the impact of a collaborative literacy coaching initiative on teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching through the point-of-view of the participants. Specifically, case study, a form of qualitative research, was selected because I was interested in "process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation" (p. 19). Case study involves "intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system" (p. 19).

Miles and Huberman (1994) described a case as "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (p. 25). This study involved multiple cases (three teachers) that were selected in order to understand the participants' different perspectives within a bounded context. They were bounded together by their participation in a nine-month, collaborative literacy coaching initiative. They brought different perspectives to the study because they were influenced by the various cultures and subcultures that existed within their individual school buildings, classrooms, subject-areas, and more, despite their shared experience of

participation in the literacy coaching initiative. Case study enabled me to “optimize understanding” of the complexities of this bounded system (Stake, 2003).

This collective or multiple participant study recognized and valued an important aspect of qualitative research – that “multiple realities” and complex worldviews exist (Merriam, 2001, p. 4 ). Additionally, it adhered to all five key characteristics inherent to all forms of qualitative research, which I explain below. Readence, Kile, and Mallette (1998) stated by way of underscoring Fenstermacher (1979) that “because of the subjective nature of beliefs and the central role they play in teachers’ actions, beliefs are best investigated through qualitative research methodologies” (p. 144). Readence, et al. (1998) also pointed out that not only do teachers’ beliefs differ across content areas they are “idiosyncratic” (p. 144) or what Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985) described as “highly person-specific” (p. 24). For these reasons, a qualitative approach and case study were most appropriate.

This study also aligned with the key characteristics of qualitative research. First, I attempted to understand the phenomenon being studied from the participants’ point-of-view, not from my own. Because the phenomenon was understood and explained from an “insider’s perspective,” not an “outsider’s view,” (Merriam, 2001, p. 6) it is considered to be emic. Second, I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, and third, I spent extended time in the field collecting and analyzing multiple data sources, which according to Maxwell (1996) allowed me to better understand and interpret the participants’ perspectives and how that influenced their behaviors. Figure 1 on page 128 in this chapter details the amount of time I spent in the field with each participant. Over nine



months, I averaged 107 hours in contact with each participant. Fourth, I employed an inductive research strategy to “build” rather than prove “abstractions, concepts, hypothesis or theories” (Merriam, 2001, p. 7). Themes emerged as a result of data analysis from which I made assertions detailed in Chapter Four. My purpose was not to prove or measure changes in participants’ sense of efficacy for literacy teaching that resulted from participation in a collaborative literacy coaching initiative as might be the case with a quantitative design. Instead, I sought to understand. Since I did not know a priori what I would find and because I wanted to generate data rich in detail and embedded in context, qualitative research was appropriate. Finally, a qualitative approach allowed me to use words to present a descriptive account of my cases. Other approaches such as quantitative would lack the specificity and richness that a qualitative approach was able to provide through use of descriptions, rather than through use of numbers and statistical analysis.

Gaining a better understanding of changes in participants’ personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching within the context of a collaborative literacy coaching initiative contributes to the developing bodies of research on literacy coaching and teachers’ beliefs as they relate to efficacy for literacy teaching at the middle and high school levels.

### **Selection of Participants**

Purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) was used to identify three participants from a group of sixteen teachers (see Appendix A) who were involved in the collaborative literacy coaching initiative within a rural, public school setting over nine months. This type of sampling is “based on the assumption that the

investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2001, p. 61). In order to identify participants from which the most could be learned, I established selection criteria. The selection criteria included consideration of the following: (a) willingness and consent to participate, (b) approval of building principal, (c) typical in one’s personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching in comparison with the other teachers involved in the literacy coaching initiative, (d) typical in one’s literacy-related practices in comparison with the other teachers involved in the literacy coaching initiative, and (e) maximum variation in regard to years of experience teaching as well as grade-levels and content areas currently being taught. It was important to select participants that would enable my research to be sensitive to and informed by both the idiosyncratic nature of beliefs as well as the differences inherent in the sociocultural context of the participants’ teaching backgrounds and grade-levels and subject areas being taught.

In order to select participants, I distributed a teacher demographic and background information sheet (see Appendix B), an informational letter and *Human Subjects Consent* form (see Appendix C), and an initial questionnaire (see Appendix D). I verbally shared details of my study with all sixteen teachers involved in the collaborative literacy coaching initiative during meetings scheduled the last week of August in the first semester of the study. At this time, I asked everyone to complete the information sheet designed to obtain demographic and background data, including years of teaching experience and current grade-level(s) and content area(s) being taught. Additionally, I asked everyone to complete the initial

questionnaire in order to gather information regarding their sense of efficacy as well as existing literacy-related beliefs and practices.

The information sheet and the initial questionnaire provided me with a general understanding of teachers' literacy related beliefs and practices and data to determine whether or not participants' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching was typical in comparison to the others involved in the literacy coaching initiative. This determination involved several steps. First, I assigned a positive, negative, or neutral rating for personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching based on the nature of the teachers' responses on the initial questionnaire. Second, I entered an overall rating on a chart I created to collect information about potential participants (See Appendix A). Third, after ratings for each area of interest (personal and general sense of efficacy) were assigned and entered, I was able to examine the chart to determine if participants were typical in their beliefs in comparison to the others.

I followed-up administration of the information sheet and questionnaire with individual classroom observations and teacher interviews with potential participants early within the first semester of the study in order to gain a better understanding of what individuals shared and to establish whether or not a disconnect existed between what I observed or heard and teachers' self-reported sense of efficacy, beliefs and practices. This ensured that adjustments to previously assigned ratings could be made if necessary.

Prior to final selection, I collected consent forms, checked for signatures granting willingness to participate, and I confirmed permission for participation

from the middle and high school principals to ensure that I would have adequate access to individuals for events beyond the coaching initiative such as additional observations and one-on-one interviews as well as to make sure they believed the individuals involved in the study were capable of following through with the requirements. Permission to conduct this study had already been received from both my university (see HSCL #15393 in Appendix E) and district and building administration prior to recruiting teachers for the collaborative literacy coaching initiative. My entry into the district is explained in more detail within the section about the context of the study.

As previously discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, problems exist with available measurements of teachers' efficacy related to accurately assessing both dimensions of the construct of efficacy. I agree with Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998), Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and Bandura (1997) that efficacy measures should consider both dimensions of efficacy and recognize that issues surround existing measurements of teachers' efficacy that attempted to achieve this. Also, I believe that a measure specific to a content area, such as the recent one for literacy teaching developed by Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011), would be an appropriate type of instrument to use or adapt. However, this instrument was not available at the time of the present study. As a result, I elected not to use or adapt an existing scale such as the popular *Teacher Efficacy Scale* created by Gibson and Dembo (1984) as part of participant selection or when considering changes to teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy in the present study. Instead, I decided to create an initial and follow-up questionnaire (see Appendices D & F) and

rely on participants' words to understand changes to their personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. The questionnaires are described in more detail on pages 146 and 147 of this chapter. Use of questions/statements written to uncover beliefs about areas related to literacy teaching allowed connections to participants' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching to emerge using their own words.

Participants' true identities are not revealed when sharing selection specifics, or when discussing information obtained throughout the study or its results. Participants were informed that their true identities would not be revealed. Instead, pseudonyms were used in order to protect participants' privacy and in an effort to ensure participants felt comfortable speaking honestly and openly throughout the study.

### **Introduction of Case Study Participants**

The three participants (Katherine, Mary Kate, & Margaret) in this case study were selected using the criteria previously noted for purposeful sampling. All three participants expressed a willingness to participate, signed consent forms, and were granted approval by their principals. All three participants were scored as typical in their personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching in comparison to the others involved in the literacy coaching collaborative as well as in their literacy-related beliefs and practices. The three participants also made for maximum variation in regard to years of experience teaching as well as grade-levels and content areas currently being taught. All were Caucasian females who held bachelor degrees and only one held a master's degree.

Participants possessed a positive general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. This was interesting to me because earlier studies found that having a high (or in other words a positive) sense of teacher efficacy is the best indicator of teacher willingness to change as a result of participation in professional development initiatives (Guskey, 1988; Smylie, 1988). One might assume that having a high or positive sense of general efficacy for literacy teaching might also be an indicator of one's willingness to make changes as part of a literacy coaching initiative. In addition, based on a long history of studies informing us about teachers' resistance to content literacy due in part to their beliefs that teaching literacy is not their job (Moore, Readence, & Richelman, 1983; O'Brien, et al., 1995), it seemed logical that before teachers would be willing to make changes to their individual literacy practices they first must believe that literacy teaching, in general, is useful and important. Although existing studies that linked coaching to teachers' efficacy beliefs have demonstrated that change is possible, even for experienced or teachers with low efficacy beliefs (Henson, 2001).

Since all participants could be characterized as having a low (negative or neutral) personal sense of efficacy for literacy teaching such that they stated they lacked knowledge or confidence related to literacy teaching, they stood a chance to be positively impacted by the literacy coaching initiative allowing us to learn from these cases.

During the days and weeks it took to conduct classroom observations and one-on-one interviews, I witnessed certain behaviors of potential participants that influenced my choices prior to making my final selection. For example, the three

participants selected exhibited eagerness and willingness to learn how to improve their literacy teaching. In addition, they demonstrated engaged participation and strong commitment to the collaborative literacy coaching initiative. Lastly, they all showed evidence of intentness on becoming a more reflective practitioner. Although I did not identify these specific characteristics in advance as criteria for participant selection beyond addressing willingness to participate as part of the consent form, in hindsight they seemed important and they factored into my final selection of participants. Specifically, it seemed important, if not necessary, to select participants who at a minimum possessed a willingness to participate fully and a desire to learn in order to uncover if literacy coaching impacts teachers' general and personal sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Without a commitment to full participation and willingness to learn, the study would only uncover more about teacher resistance, which was not its intent.

The study participants met the selection criteria and each individual possessed several key characteristics that make for strong participants of the literacy coaching initiative. In short, the three cases selected to study provided rich sources of information. I believe the study stood the best opportunity to learn about changes to teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy teaching through the lenses of their different experiences and perspectives. For example, the women represented a range in years of teaching experience with Mary Kate a veteran teacher who briefly retired before returning to the profession, Margaret a mid-career teacher, and Katherine being a first year teacher. The subject areas and grade levels taught by the participants also varied. Mary Kate taught social studies at the middle school to

seventh grade students, Margaret taught all core subjects, including language arts at the middle school to sixth grade students, and Katherine taught English and Debate at the high school to students in tenth through twelfth grade. Mary Kate has taught in several different districts across the state throughout her career, serving as a reading specialist and classroom teacher at the elementary and middle school levels. Margaret has only taught in the current district. However, she has taught at the elementary and middle school levels. Being new to teaching made Katherine new to the district and to the high school level.

The participants' personal experiences also shaped the different lenses through which they viewed their roles as teachers. Two of the participants, Mary Kate and Margaret, brought insider perspectives to their jobs as members of the community in which they lived and taught. Katherine, on the other-hand, brought an outsider's perspective as she lived in a nearby metropolitan area and commuted over fifty miles each way to work. Mary Kate has one son who attended grades K-12 in this district and he was living in another city attending college at the time of the study. Her role as a parent as well as the spouse of a retired school principal informed her role as a teacher. Margaret has three sons who attended schools within this district with one son in the seventh grade at the same middle school where the study was conducted. Her role as a parent informed her role as a teacher. Katherine did not have any children at the time of the study, but instead, was a newly wed during her first year teaching, and had a high school-aged sister living in a nearby city with whom she was close and communicated with almost daily. Katherine's role as a sister of an adolescent learner and spouse of an assistant high



school football coach working to achieve his secondary teacher education certification informed her role as a teacher.

In short, I believed that the three participants selected from the original group of sixteen, Mary Kate, Margaret, and Katherine, would provide rich sources of information. From these varied sources, I hoped to learn the most about the impact that a yearlong collaborative literacy coaching initiative had on middle and high school content area teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching.

Figure 1 depicts the amount of time spent in the field with the case study participants. It details the type of contact and associated time as well as the total contact time.

**Figure 1**

***Time in Field with Case Study Participants***

<b>Type of Contact</b>	<b>Time Frame for Contact</b>	<b>Frequency of Contact</b>	<b>Length of Contact</b>	<b>Total Hours of Contact</b>
Observation	October, January, & April	3 times per participant	90 minutes per observation	4.5 hours each
Interview	October, January, & April	3 times per participant	60 minutes per interview	3 hours each
CLC Cadre	September-May	Weekly for a total of 20 weeks	3 hours per cadre	60 hours each
Optional After School Study Group	September-May	10 meetings over 9 months. Approximately 1 per month	2 hours per cadre	20 hours each
Optional One-on-One Coaching	September-May	Mary Kate = 6 Margaret = 16 Katherine = 7	1 hour per session	Mary Kate = 5 Margaret = 16 Katherine = 7
Optional Extended PD Opportunities	September-May	5 opportunities occurring between October-April	Shanahan = 4 Wilhelm = 8 Classroom Visit 1 = 3 Classroom Visit 2 = 3 KRA Conference = 8	Mary Kate = 20 Margaret = 23 Katherine = 20
<b>Total Contact Time Per Participant:</b>				Mary Kate = 103.5 Margaret = 108.5 Katherine = 104.5 <b>Average = 105.5</b>

**Context**

**Description of the community and schools.**

The participants worked in a public school district located in a midwestern town that can be described as a predominately rural, Caucasian farming community. At the time of the study, the town had a population of approximately 12,000 and the school district had a total enrollment of 2,459 students in grades K-12. The town has five grade schools, two parochial schools, one middle school, and one senior

high school. About 65% of the district's graduates attend four year institutions of higher education, while the remaining 35% enter the job market immediately, attend two-year technical and community institutions, or join the military.

Pseudonyms are used when referring to the district or middle and high schools in which the study participants were employed.

Two of the study participants, Mary Kate and Margaret, taught at Rural Middle School (RMS), which provides education for grades six through eight and had a total enrollment of 602 students at the time of the study. RMS's Report Card (SBOE, 2006b) (retrieved from <http://svapp15586.ksde.org/rcard/summary/fy2006/D02902650.pdf>) provided information about enrollment, adequate yearly progress status, demographics, and teacher quality at the start of this study. The middle school was accredited with 69.1% of All Students achieving at or above the state proficiency level for reading. The demographic make-up for RMS (see Figure 2) included a student population that was classified as 88.5% White, 2.3% African American, 3.2% Hispanic, 5.9% Other Race/Ethnicity, 37.6% Free/Reduced Lunch, 0.0% Migrant Students, 0.8% English Learners, and 17.9% Students with Disabilities. RMS employed approximately 44 faculty, staff, and administration with 95% of its faculty fully licensed and 92.8% of core classes were taught by highly qualified personnel as viewed by the State Board of Education.

The third study participant, Katherine, taught at Rural High School (RHS), which provides education for grades nine through twelve and had a total enrollment of 885 students at the time of the study. RHS's Report Card (SBOE, 2006a)

(retrieved from <http://online.ksde.org/rcard/summary/fy2006/D02902652.pdf>)

provided information about enrollment, adequate yearly progress status, demographics, and teacher quality at the start of the study. The high school was accredited with 67.2% of All Students achieving at or above the state proficiency level for reading. The demographic make-up for RHS (see Figure 2) included a student population that was classified as 89.8% White, 2.1% African American, 3.4% Hispanic, 4.6% Other Race/Ethnicity, 24.2% Free/Reduced Lunch, 0.0% Migrant Students, 0.5% English Learners, and 12.7% Students with Disabilities. RHS employed approximately 102 faculty, staff, and administration with 86.66% of its faculty fully licensed and 85% of core classes taught by highly qualified personnel as viewed by the State Board of Education.

**Figure 2**

***Demographic Profiles***

<b>Student Group</b>	<b>% Student Group in Middle School Bldg.</b>	<b>% Student Group in High School Bldg.</b>
Free/Reduced Lunch	37.6%	24.2%
Students with Disabilities	17.9%	12.7%
English Learners	0.8%	0.5%
Migrant Students	0.0%	0.0%
African Americans	2.3%	2.1%
Hispanics	3.2%	3.4%
Whites	88.5%	89.8%
Other	5.9%	4.6%

**Role of the researcher.**

My role in this qualitative multiple bounded case study was that of participant as observer (Gold, 1958 in Merriam, 2001). Not only did I perform the role of researcher, one who collected and analyzed the data, but I also functioned as an active participant within the literacy cadre in the role of literacy coach. My “researcher’s observer activities” were known to the cadre members, but were “subordinate” to my “role as a participant” (p. 101). As the literacy coach I participated in activities, interacted with and formed relationships with the other cadre members, and worked to move the group and individuals forward as a coach operating as a leader among equals. Due to the nature and goal of the literacy cadre,

I positioned myself as a collaborative partner and co-learner, rather than as an expert coach. However, our collaboration did not meet Merriam's defining characteristic of a "collaborative partner" (p. 101) stance in that participants were not my equal partners in the research process and did not help to define the problem to be studied, collect and analyze data, or write and report the results.

### **Collaborative literacy coaching initiative overview.**

I examined teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching within the context of a collaborative literacy coaching initiative that was developed and facilitated by me. The initiative was informed by the Reading Instruction Study (RIS) and components of its professional development process (Richardson, 1994a) as well as Boston Public School's Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) initiative (Neufeld & Roper, 2002, 2003b).

During the spring semester prior to the fall start of the present study, I met with district and building-level administrators in a rural school district to discuss potential literacy professional development and research opportunities. The district received a small grant to help fund literacy professional development for the upcoming school year and they invited me to a meeting to discuss options with them as I had previously provided content literacy professional development to this district's high school staff. Initially, the district desired to create a literacy coach position and was interested in employing me to work full-time, one-on-one with high school teachers. However, I proposed that the funds instead be used to support expenses (i.e. substitute teacher coverage, professional texts, teacher stipends, conference fees, and more) related to implementing a yearlong collaborative

literacy coaching (CLC) professional development initiative. In addition, I expressed interest in conducting research related to our efforts and informed the district of my desire to design a study and use the data to fulfill my dissertation requirements.

After checking with my advisor and receiving permission to conduct research in this rural district, I met again with district and building-level administrators and a small group of teachers. This meeting took place during the end of the same spring semester in which my initial conversations with the district occurred. At this time, I explained the purpose and goal of the proposed CLC initiative and present study to district personnel (central office administrator, building-level administrators and a small group of teachers) in order to gain permission and generate interest in the present study.

During the summer months, I met two more times with building-level administrators to discuss additional details related to the CLC initiative and the present study. During these meetings, I was told by the middle and high school building principals that they would continue to work with their staffs to encourage up to eight teachers to self-select from each school, for a total of sixteen content area teachers, to participate in the CLC initiative and who would make up a pool of possible participants for the present study. Although only three cases were selected, as previously described, from the larger pool of sixteen, the entire pool of potential participants were invited to take part in the CLC initiative over the course of the school year. They were organized to form a total of four CLC cadres.

The four CLC cadres that were formed included two cadres at the middle school and two cadres at the high school (see Figure 3). The CLC cadres consisted of

four teacher participants in each, plus me serving as participant-as-observer in all four cadres. The high school cadres were made up of teachers from the English Department and the middle school cadres were made up of a mix of teachers from all three grade-levels (6-8), various grade-level teams, and various content areas.

**Figure 3**  
*CLC Cadres*

*Original CLC Cadre Assignments*

<b>Tuesday A.M. Cadre (MMS)</b>	<b>Thursday A.M. Cadre (MHS)</b>
<i>John</i>	Elizabeth
Margaret	Katherine
<i>Nala</i>	Susie
<i>David</i>	Patricia
<b>Tuesday P.M. Cadre (MMS)</b>	<b>Thursday P.M. Cadre (MHS)</b>
Mary Kate	Matthew
<i>Patrick</i>	Michael
Dorothy	Teresa
Rosemary	Judy

Note: *Dropped out of the CLC Initiative*

Study participants together with their colleagues within their assigned CLC cadres engaged in ongoing study and were provided with a wide range of professional texts, articles, and resources (see Appendix G) to support knowledge and skills reviewed in Chapter Two as well as to assist their learning around topics uncovered by their own questions and inquiry. The collaborative literacy cadre occurred over a nine-month period from August to May.

More specifically, this study utilized a type of literacy coaching model designed for working with groups of teachers in which the literacy coach facilitated a collaborative process and served as a co-learner, rather than expert (Richardson,



1994a). The goal of the process was to support teachers in becoming more reflective and empowered around their literacy teaching and students' literacy learning. Richardson suggested this could be done by helping teachers think about their current beliefs and practices, examining new beliefs, ideas, information and practices, and understanding and valuing their own and others' expertise as part of a collaborative group.

The information within the literature review in Chapter Two and the resource list noted in Appendix G were not identified and shared as a body of knowledge to be understood and accepted. Rather, an overview of ideas and information contained within the review and the appendix were shared throughout the study to serve as starting points that needed to be "contextualized and reconstructed by individual teachers" (Richardson & Anders, 1994, p. 207).

Like the researchers in the RIS study (Richardson, 1994a), I set forth with a general idea for the content and process for the collaborative coaching initiative and then released control so that the individual cadres could shape the direction of the content and process. This was different than an expert literacy coaching approach or traditional professional development model in which the content is pre-determined by the literacy coach or professional developer. Instead, as a literacy coach functioning as a co-learner I worked "as one of many experts in a collaborative process" (Richardson & Anders, 1994, p. 205) to ask questions, share resources and expertise and seek to find relevant answers. This approach also included modeling the use of theory and research to ground my thinking and to help

articulate my reasons for believing. Additionally, considerable time was allowed for discussions around research, theory, and practice (Richardson, 1994a).

The collaborative literacy coaching initiative consisted of one required component and three optional components. The required component was the literacy coaching cadre that occurred weekly for three hours during the school day and consisted of an ongoing cycle of (a) reflection and inquiry, (b) classroom experience, (c) feedback, and (d) theory and content knowledge-building. The optional components included: (e) after school study group, (f) one-on-one coaching, and (g) extended professional development opportunities. The study group component was part of the initiative's original design and occurred outside of the school day. However, the other two optional components grew out of changes to the initiative's flexible design driven by participants' needs and desires. Unlike the study group, these two components took place during the school day, but required either substitute coverage or use of planning periods in order to enable teachers to attend.

***Required weekly literacy coaching cadre.***

The following is a brief description of the initiative's required component, the weekly, three-hour, literacy-coaching cadre, which borrows from Boston Public School's Collaborative Coaching & Learning (CCL) approach (Neufled & Roper, 2002, 2003b). The weekly, literacy-coaching cadre had four key parts: reflection and inquiry, classroom experience, feedback, and theory and content knowledge building. Details about how the four parts combine to form an ongoing cycle

connected to teaching and learning as well as how the process was originally shared with the cadres are as follows:

*Reflection and inquiry.*

The coaching cycle began with a reflection and inquiry session held during the school day at the same time each week (i.e. during 1<sup>st</sup> period every Thursday). During this time, the cadre set goals, looked at data, shared what they were learning, discussed classroom implementation of instructional strategies, planned for demonstration lessons and classroom implementation, raised questions for ongoing study, and revisited and/or expanded upon an aspect of theory or content knowledge introduced through professional readings, or during an optional after-school study group. This time period also served as a “pre-conference” for the classroom demonstration that followed.

*Classroom experience.*

The inquiry session was followed by a classroom demonstration by the literacy coach or one of the cadre members (i.e. during 2<sup>nd</sup> hour on Thursday). The coach or a cadre member modeled a specific strategy or combination of strategies. The lesson was designed to address a particular question that came out of the cadre’s area of inquiry about the new strategy (e.g. “How do I help students select a book that they can and will read using *bookpass*?”). The demonstration lessons occurred in the classroom of one of the teachers in the cadre, but not necessarily in the same classroom. Members of the cadre were welcome to provide demonstration lessons in addition to the literacy coach. However, no one was required to do a demo lesson for the cadre if they chose not to do so. The focus of the classroom

experience was on the strategy, not the literacy coach or the teacher conducting the demonstration.

*Feedback.*

Immediately following the classroom experience, the cadre debriefed (i.e. during 3<sup>rd</sup> hour on Thursday). Debriefing time was reserved for the cadre to review and analyze the lesson they observed. It was also time for members of the cadre to commit to introducing the strategy/strategies in their own classrooms in the coming week. All members of the cadre were expected to try the new strategy in their own classroom before the following week's time for Reflection & Inquiry. Additionally, time was spent before the group dismissed to agree on the topic for the next demonstration lesson and to record their thoughts and reflections in their journals.

*Theory and content knowledge-building.*

The process of reflection and inquiry, classroom experience, and feedback repeated itself the same time exactly one week later. In between the weekly, collaborative, literacy coaching cadre meetings and part of the ongoing cycle of teaching and learning, individuals practiced the observed strategy and or other aspects of literacy instruction in their own classrooms, took time to record their new learning(s), thoughts, and reflections related to their literacy beliefs and practices in a journal, and had the option of supplementing professional readings and discussions incorporated into the weekly cadre by attending an after-school study group. The optional after-school study group is explained in more detail later

in this section along with two additional optional components that were later added to the coaching initiative.

I explained to cadre members that the above cycle would have the option to flex as needed in order to work around various constraints imposed by individual teacher and school schedules as well as be modified to better address identified areas of inquiry or questions posed by the group members as well as to meet the needs of the group. By way of example of how the process could change, I noted that group members might decide to stretch the four parts of the collaborative coaching cycle over a different time period, rather than always have three of the four parts occur in the same day. Or, group members could decide to change or modify the suggested content within each of the four parts.

Being a collaborative effort, modifications did occur. For example, members decided to make time for both topics of interest specific to the entire group (i.e. incorporating use of read alouds in content classes) as well as for exploring and sharing progress on areas of individual interest (i.e. spelling and writing instruction) during the weekly coaching cadre. Additionally, the cadres elected to vary the classroom experience week-to-week such that it sometimes involved watching demonstrations as a group in a classroom with students, other times participating in a demonstrations outside of a classroom with cadre members acting as students, and other times eliminating the classroom experience altogether in favor of practicing strategies on their own without an audience outside of the weekly cadre timeframe drawing upon a video demonstration or description from a professional text or article. Therefore, the agenda for the weekly cadre was

adjusted accordingly to make time for sharing, reflecting, studying, planning, and/or modeling depending on how the group elected to handle the classroom experience. See Appendices H and I for sample agendas.

***Optional after-school study group.***

As previously mentioned, the collaborative literacy-coaching initiative involved three optional components in addition to the required weekly, literacy-coaching cadre. The after-school study group was the only optional component that was part of the original initiative design. The initial schedule allowed time for the study group to meet bi-monthly September through May for 2 ½ hours per meeting. The district agreed to pay teachers an hourly stipend if they attended the study group. Attendance was optional. However, I did ask the teachers to commit to regular participation and stay for the entire study group, rather than drop in and out attending on a hit and miss basis should they decide to be a part of the study group. Originally, 11 teachers (six from the middle school and five from the high school) signed up and attended the initial meetings. Later, the group size changed to four with three of them being the study participants.

During the initial meetings, participants were asked to read and discuss three chapters from the book, *Teacher Study Groups: Building Community through Dialogue and Reflection* (Birchak, et al., 1998). The chapter addressed how study groups are defined, organized, and what they do. We established group norms, identified emerging goals and determined how we wanted to proceed as a result of our discussions. The group identified the middle-high school literacy connection as their main topic of interest. They wanted to better understand literacy instruction

at middle and high school levels and find ways to work together to support each other's efforts and their students' transition from one building to the other.

The group read and discussed a variety of materials related to their identified topic, including Langer's (2001) report on effective reading and writing instruction in middle and high schools, NCTE's call to action for adolescent literacy (NCTE, 2006), and IRA's adolescent literacy position statement (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999). Related topics such as learning about each school's North Central Accreditation (NCA) reading plans and district student success plans were brought to the table during the group's discussions. They even discussed recruiting elementary teachers to join the group so that they could truly explore student literacy issues from a district K-12 perspective.

The next session's study group agenda was co-created at the end of each meeting and was based on the group's topics of interest. This after-school group nicely complimented what was happening during the "in school" weekly CLC cadre. However, it was not a seamless match as each "in school" cadre had an identity of its own and was exploring topics of interest unique to its members.

However, after the first four meetings attendance for many started to be a problem, especially for the high school teachers, and several teachers stopped participating. Some reasons that were shared included conflicts with other commitments such as coaching and after-school tutoring or "twilight school" classes, misunderstandings around mandatory versus voluntary attendance, and issues related to payment of stipends for high school participants. The end result was a

much smaller study group with representation of two high school teachers, and several months later only one.

With the study group's new make-up consisting primarily of middle school teachers (three middle school and one high school teacher), the focus of study and goals shifted resulting in an informal extension of the middle school "in school" literacy coaching cadre. During this "new" and "revised" study group, more often than not, we met at a local coffee shop and discussed professional texts that we read, shared resources and ideas, wrestled with ideas and challenges, generated ideas, and crafted plans that grew out of our time together and work during the school day.

***Optional one-on-one literacy-coaching.***

A second optional component to the initiative, one-on-one literacy coaching, grew out of changes to the make-up of individual cadres and remaining group members' needs and desires. It was not part of my original collaborative literacy coaching initiative design as was the after school study group. Several weeks into the process, four teachers from the middle school (two from each middle school cadre) elected to drop out, thus causing us to combine the remaining middle school cadre members to form one group with a total of four members (see Figure 4). This change opened up a three-hour time slot on Tuesday mornings. Upon asking the remaining cadres how they would like to use this time, it was decided that I would make myself available for one-on-one literacy coaching for any cadre member at the middle or high school who was interested in additional individual support.



Although this time was available to all cadre members, one teacher out of the remaining twelve almost exclusively, with a few exceptions, took advantage of the extra support. It should be noted that the newly available time slot worked well with this particular teacher's planning and class schedule making it easier for her than for other teachers to take advantage of the extra support. This teacher was also one of the three case study participants and the additional time nicely supported her growing interest in certain literacy practices that were heading down a different path than her other cadre members. On average, case study participants spent an extra 9.3 hours with me for one-on-one literacy coaching (see Figure 1).

**Figure 4**  
*Adjusted CLC Cadre Assignments*

<b>Tuesday A.M.</b>	<b>Thursday A.M. Cadre (MHS)</b>
Time available for 1-on-1 literacy coaching	Elizabeth
	<i>Katherine</i>
	Susie
	Patricia
<b>Tuesday P.M. (MMS)</b>	<b>Thursday P.M. Cadre (MHS)</b>
<i>Mary Kate</i>	Matthew
<i>Margaret</i>	Michael
Dorothy	Teresa
Rosemary	Judy

Note: *Case Study Participants*

#### ***Optional extended professional development opportunities.***

A third optional component of the collaborative literacy coaching initiative developed out of conversations during the weekly literacy cadres and were referred to by participants as "field trips." Again, like the one-on-one literacy coaching, this

optional component was not part of my coaching initiative's original design.

Approximately five “field trips” or extended professional development opportunities were planned and attended by cadre members in an effort to enhance participants’ learning, and, in some cases, provide access to existing models of classroom practices group members were exploring. The extended professional development opportunities typically involved attending an “event” such as a presentation or demonstration and was always followed by a question and answer session with the presenter as well as a debriefing session with me and the rest of the cadre members to unpack our learning and plan for next steps. Figure 5 below provides an overview of the various opportunities.

#### **Extended Professional Development Opportunities**

<b>What</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Timothy Shanahan Presentation	November	Overland Park, KS	3 hours	Effective Components of Adolescent Literacy Programs in Middle & High Schools
Jeffrey Wilhelm Workshop	January	Kansas City, MO	7 hours	Improving Reading & Writing Using Strategies
Classroom Visit	January	Overland Park, KS	2 hours	<i>Words Their Way</i> Demonstration
Classroom Visit	January	Lawrence, KS	2 hours	Strategy Instruction within a Balanced Literacy Classroom
KRA Conference	April	Topeka, KS	6 hours	Various sessions/topics including: Stephanie Harvey (strategies), Marcia Invernizzi (WTW), and Doug Buehl (adolescent literacy)

## **Data Collection**

Data collection consisted of multiple data sources, including initial and follow-up questionnaires, audio recordings, observations, interviews, and documents over a nine-month timeframe (see Appendix J for timeline). The first weeks and months concentrated on the formation of collaborative cadres and figuring out how the coaching/inquiry cycle worked best, and adjustments to both were made as needed. Initial and follow-up questionnaires, transcripts of the weekly collaborative literacy coaching cadres, and transcripts of one-on-one teacher interviews provided the primary sources of data for this study. Other data collected include researcher field notes and reflections of the weekly coaching cadres, classroom observations, teacher interviews, notes from the after-school study group, and extended professional development opportunities. Additionally, supporting documents such as weekly agendas, handouts, planning notes, and email correspondence were collected and maintained for use with data analysis.

A transcriptionist was hired who was not affiliated with the school district, schools, or participants involved in the study to help with transcribing the audio-recordings. The true identity of the participants remained anonymous to everyone except the researcher.

Below I discuss each of the multiple sources of data in more detail. Refer to Appendix J for a chart that displays the present study's data collection timeline.

### **Teacher background and demographic information sheet.**

Participants completed an information sheet (see Appendix B) that provided me with background and demographic data such as education level, area(s) of

certification, years of teaching experience, current teaching assignment(s), literacy professional development experiences, and more. Additionally, some questions were included to learn about individual's interest and availability for the after-school study group, initiative goals, learning styles/needs, and beliefs about literacy teaching. Specifically, two questions were included on the information sheet in order to gain insight into their beliefs about literacy teaching. The first question asked, "How would you respond to the quote, 'Every teacher is a teacher of reading?' Do you agree/disagree with this statement? Explain." The second question was a follow-up to the first and stated, "Why do you believe the above quote's call for help from content area teachers historically has fallen on deaf ears? Explain." The information sheet primarily helped with participant selection, but also provided some useful data for answering my research questions.

### **Initial questionnaire.**

An initial questionnaire (see Appendix D) was designed to obtain information about participants' existing personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching as well as insight into their literacy-related beliefs and practices using self-reported information. The questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the study prior to participation in the coaching initiative. It consisted of open-ended questions such as, "To what extent do you believe you can impact students' learning through literacy teaching, despite challenges such as low skills, lack of motivation, and home environment? Explain." It also included statements and questions to which participants had to select a response that indicated whether or not they agreed or disagreed. Space was provided for participants to write a

comment and participants' were encouraged to do so if they had a difficult time making a selection in order to provide me with insight into their forced-choice. An example of a statement to which participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed was, "Content teachers in middle and high schools need to concentrate instructional time on content, not on reading instruction."

### **Follow-up questionnaire.**

Participants were provided with a follow-up questionnaire (see Appendix F) at the end of the literacy coaching initiative in May. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to me electronically, which they all did. The follow-up questionnaire was similar to the initial questionnaire and included a mix of open-ended questions and a series of statements or questions to which participants were required to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed. Several of the open-ended questions included on the follow-up questionnaire were designed to help answer both research questions. Participants responded to questions about changes to their personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching as a result of participation in the literacy coaching initiative, which provided information to help answer the first research question. They also responded to questions about what they perceived to be the most powerful part(s) of the literacy coaching initiative, which was useful in answering the second research question. Although several of the questions were the same on both questionnaires, my intent was not to measure changes in a pre/post-test fashion. Instead, I sought to understand participants' unique experiences and any changes reported through their own descriptions.

### **Weekly collaborative literacy coaching cadres.**

Four different cadres existed. However, the three case study participants were spread across only two of the four cadres. Mary Kate and Margaret were in the same cadre that met weekly on Tuesday afternoons and Katherine was in a different cadre that met weekly on Thursday mornings. Transcripts of audio-recordings of the weekly literacy coaching cadres were a primary source of data. Audio-recordings from each cadre were collected and then transcribed word for word each week. Over the course of nine months each cadre met twenty times, three hours each. A total of 120 hours of audio-recordings were transcribed and coded using an inductive protocol from the two cadres in which the case study participants were involved. See Appendices H & I for sample CLC cadre agendas.

### **Classroom observations.**

I observed participants in their classrooms teaching a content literacy lesson of their choice three times each over the course of the initiative. My goal was to schedule observations as close as possible to the beginning, middle, and end of the initiative. I worked closely with participants to select times that worked best for them, which ending up being in October, January, and April. Observations lasted between 50 and 90 minutes, depending on participants' class schedules. Each of Mary Kate's observations was 50 minutes and Katherine's was 90 minutes long. Margaret's first observation was 50 minutes and the following two were 90 minutes. I recorded what I observed during the observations using semi-structured field notes (see Appendix K) that included a column for what I was seeing and a column for what I was thinking. I did not use a formal observation protocol. However, my observations followed a similar pattern each time that included noting the physical

setting of each classroom, tracking what teachers and students were saying and doing throughout the class, and identifying the lesson topic and objective.

Immediately following each observation I made an audio recording of my field notes, adding additional information, insights, and impressions that I was unable to capture during the observation in writing. The audio-recordings were later transcribed word-for-word.

### **Interviews.**

Each observation was followed by a face-to-face, semi-structured interview with the participant for a total of three interviews per participant. Interviews were approximately 45-60 minutes each, during which I sought to gain insight into participants' unique literacy-related beliefs and practices within the context of the content literacy lesson I observed. The interviews took place as soon as possible following each observation and in a location of the participants' choice. Most of the time participants chose to meet in their classrooms. However, Mary Kate preferred to meet in a local coffee shop for two of her three interviews. Each interview was audio-taped and then transcribed word-for-word. A copy of the transcript was shown to participants when possible so that they could check for accuracy. In addition to audio-taping, at certain points during the interviews I also took field notes. However, most of the time I did not, take field notes, electing instead to focus on the conversation, then write and audio-record field notes immediately following the interview, and later transcribe them.

A semi-structured interview format was used so I could address specific areas of interest while still having flexibility to explore new or unexpected ideas

raised by the participants during the interview (Merriam, 2001). I used an interview guide (see Appendix L) that I adapted from Richardson (1994b). Primarily, the guide was intended to remind me of topics and categories that I wanted to know more about, but I did not hesitate to set the guide aside and let the participants guide the interviews and inform the questions I asked.

I employed member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by starting each interview sharing what I observed from my field notes and confirming its accuracy with the participants. This served as a way to remind both of us what occurred, but also provided a way for me to open up the conversation and allow the participant to determine its direction by saying, “So tell me more about what I saw.” Typically, this brought out what was on the forefront of the participant’s mind and allowed me to let the participant do the talking while I listened to uncover its importance. I used follow-up probes to allow participants to clarify meaning or expand on an idea or related topic which they introduced. This approach was influenced by training I had received on a particular model of coaching, Cognitive Coaching™ (Costa & Garmston, 2002), and from information shared in Toll’s (2005) guidebook for literacy coaching.

#### **Optional after-school study group.**

When possible, I audio-recorded the after-school study group meetings. I was unable to record every meeting, because the location varied and not all settings were conducive for recording. However, I did write and then audio-record field notes immediately following every study group. The audio-recordings and field notes were transcribed word for word.



**Field notes.**

Throughout the entire study, I kept field notes (see Appendix K). This included during and after each weekly literacy coaching cadre, classroom observation, teacher interview, after-school study group, one-on-one coaching meeting, extended professional development opportunity, and any other related meeting or event that was planned or transpired as part of the literacy coaching initiative.

**Other supporting documents.**

I collected a variety of supporting documents throughout the study. For example, I created and collected weekly agendas for each of the coaching sessions. I collected copies of handouts, articles, or other print materials used as part of each weekly literacy coaching cadre, classroom observation, after school study group meeting, extended professional development opportunity, one-on-one coaching meeting, or other related meeting or event that was planned or transpired as part of the literacy coaching initiative.

**Participants' reflection journals.**

Participants were provided with blank journals, asked to make entries into the journal at least once a week, and were informed that the journals would be collected at the end of the initiative to use as part of data analysis. The journals were intended for participants to record and reflect on their learning journey throughout the literacy coaching initiative as it related to their beliefs, knowledge, and practices. A two-column format was suggested for organizing entries into "doing/thinking" sections. Figure 4 below is an example (not an exhaustive one)

provided to participants to illustrate the type of information that they might record within each of the “doing/thinking” sections.

**Figure 6**

***Sample Participants’ Reflection Journal***

“Doing”	“Thinking”
<p>Use this column to capture what you are “doing” in your literacy coaching cadre, in your classroom, during study group, in meetings and conversations with colleagues, or more. For example, you might record what you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading (professional &amp; personal)</li> <li>• Discussing</li> <li>• Sharing</li> <li>• Discovering</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Observing</li> </ul>	<p>Use this column to capture what you are “thinking” about your literacy-related beliefs, knowledge, &amp; practices. For example, you might record what . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connections</li> <li>• Reflections</li> <li>• Questions</li> <li>• Ah-ha’s</li> <li>• Concerns</li> </ul> <p>. . . you are making or discovering.</p>

Unfortunately, I was not able to use the journals as intended as part of my data analysis. Participants did not use the provided journals to make weekly entries, because they already had another journal or system in place (i.e. Mary Kate used several “pocket-size” journals of her own that she carried with her all the time into which she made both personal and professional entries, Katherine kept an electronic journal daily on her computer to capture her first year of teaching, and Margaret took notes and recorded reflections directly onto the agendas, handouts or articles and maintained a file in which she kept everything associated with the literacy coaching initiative.

At the end of the initiative, participants were not willing to part with their journals, not even with the promise to promptly return them or go back and select sections to copy and share. I concluded that asking participants to keep a separate journal was too much. Additionally, because they were already behaving as reflective practitioners in all aspects of their work and maintaining a journal or “system” for reflection, it must have seemed impossible to them to separate out parts of their journals to share with me that were relevant to the literacy coaching initiative.

Although the information would have been extremely informative given what we know about teachers’ beliefs such that they operate within systems and are influenced by a variety of factors making them difficult to individually tease apart, it might have felt like an invasion of privacy to hand over their existing journals or too time consuming at the end of a very long experience to select segments to share. Despite knowing I risked losing rich data, I felt it was more important to respect participants’ privacy and wishes as well as to maintain their trust. Therefore, I did not collect their journals or require them to go back and copy sections to share and as a result could not analyze this data source. I did audio-record my thoughts on a regular basis throughout the study in an “electronic reflection journal” and later transcribe them. As a result, I have a record of my own reflective journey throughout the process, but not of the participants’.

### **Data Analysis**

Audio-recordings of multiple data sources were transcribed word for word and analyzed to identify emerging themes and patterns using the constant-

comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process involved reading through all transcripts several times to identify recurring themes and coding the data according to topics or issues that emerged from the data while simultaneously conducting a cross-case analysis looking for similarities and differences, relationships and perspectives that might help answer my research questions. As I read and reread the transcripts searching for units of meaning from participants' words, I marked examples of personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching using two different colored highlighters, made notes in the margins, and assigned codes. Next, I built a spreadsheet using Excel and created columns to identify and keep track of key information such as participant, data source, date, quote, notes, code, and theme. This tracking system allowed me to quickly and easily refer back to the original data source so that I did not lose sight of its original context as well as locate and read my related field notes to clarify or deepen understanding of the context from which the participants' words occurred. I copied and pasted the identified quote and entered the other information into their respective columns in the spreadsheet. Following data entry, I was able to sort by inductive code, analyze like codes, and then assign a category or theme. This involved a back and forth process of rereading, recoding, resorting and reassigning themes as I treated the assigned codes and themes as temporary and flexible until I achieved a comfort level with the pattern that emerged such that I could make assertions and adequately address my research questions.

### **Validity, Trustworthiness, and Limitations**

#### **Validity.**

Several steps were taken in order to ensure the conclusions drawn in this study are valid as “all fieldwork done by a single field worker invites the question, Why should we believe it?” (Bosk in Maxwell, 1996, p. 87). Since a researcher’s descriptions and interpretations can pose threats to validity, I attempted to control for threats within each type of understanding (Maxwell, 1996). First, I attempted to collect data that was rich with details in order to be able to accurately and completely describe all observed events. Through triangulation, audio-taping, verbatim transcription of as much data as possible and member-checking of interview transcriptions when possible, I attempted to control for threats to what I heard and observed. Next, I sought to control for threats to my interpretation of the data. This was achieved by acknowledging that the threat of researcher bias exists, and then working to keep my own perspective or a pre-existing framework aside when conducting interviews and data analysis. Through use of semi-structured interviews with attention to open-ended questions and active listening skills, I sought to allow my participants’ thoughts and words, not mine, be heard. During analysis, I was conscious of my preconceptions and worked to set them aside as well as resisted the urge to make the data fit any existing theory or framework. Instead, I focused on the participants’ words to allow themes to emerge out of the data.

### **Trustworthiness.**

Several steps were taken to maximize trustworthiness. First, the duration of study and time spent in the field with participants provided me with the opportunity to get to know the participants and together develop trusting relationships. Handwritten field notes were taken during each encounter with

participants (literacy cadre, observation, interview, one-on-one coaching, after school literacy cadre, and extended professional development opportunity and debrief) and were immediately tape recorded following each encounter to more completely capture all of the details and observations that abbreviations, scribbles and cryptic notations cannot and later transcribed and reviewed to assist with follow through and planning for future sessions. Participants were made aware that I would be taking detailed notes in my journal throughout the study and were informed that the purpose of my notes was to accurately capture as many details as possible from our shared literacy coaching experience as well as to assist me with planning and follow through from session to session.

Participants were informed that my field notes would not be shared with anyone without their permission, including their principal or other colleagues. However, they did grant me permission to share any data collected, including information recorded in my field notes, for purposes of this study. Often times I would ask to read what I recorded in my notes to participants to check for accuracy, model reflective note-taking (something I was encouraging them to practice), and to alleviate any sense of secrecy as well as decrease any level of concern regarding the content of my notes. Initially, participants appeared keenly aware that I was constantly writing in my notebook. However, over time this practice did not seem to capture participants' attention, leading me to believe that I won their trust and that they realized that their privacy was protected as well as believed that my purpose for taking notes was to understand and learn from our time together, rather than evaluate individuals or the group.

Second, the use of tape-recording, transcribing, and sharing sample transcriptions with participants allowed me to more accurately capture and describe events. Participants were allowed to request taping to stop at any point that they felt uncomfortable or did not wish to have their comments recorded. At various times throughout the study participants did request taping to be stopped for one reason or another. I noted in my field notes and in the transcription that recording was stopped and did not note the nature or content of the conversations that occurred ensuring that they truly were “off the record.”

Finally, I intentionally described my role to participants and positioned myself as a co-learner in this study. Not only does a co-learner stance fit within my personal beliefs about coaching and adult learning, but also I hoped it would ensure my trustworthiness by functioning in the role of a supportive colleague rather than evaluator. By showing respect and honoring that all participants bring varying degrees of knowledge around a multitude of information to the table and by being willing to sit should-to-shoulder with participants and question, study, wrestle with, figure out and learn more in order to enhance or change our existing beliefs and practices, I believed this approach would build a level of mutual respect and trust that would allow us to achieve more than if I positioned myself as the one with all the answers. I stressed throughout the study for nine months that this was not an “expert” model, rather a collaborative process in which together we would ask questions, share resources and expertise and seek to find answers to issues relevant to us. Although sometimes frustrated by my practice of asking questions, rather than providing answers, participants grew to believe that I truly trusted them to be

as capable or better than I at finding solutions to their own problems. This approach contributed to my trustworthiness as a researcher-participant and underscored the importance of understanding the complexity of individual classroom contexts when it comes to implementing literacy practices. You may have the answer for one setting, but need to rethink it in another setting. I was interested in supporting teachers so they could think through problems and find possible solutions, rather than providing answers that may or may not work in their classroom.

### **Limitations.**

Several limitations to my study should be noted. First, due to the limited number of participants (three) and to the fact that all three are Midwestern, Caucasian, females teaching in a small, rural public school district, it should be noted that neither they nor their experiences may be representative of a larger and more varied sample. Therefore, the sample size, selected participants, and context for the study are not large or diverse enough to make generalizations from this multiple case study beyond the individual cases described in this study to other cases. Additionally, the use of questionnaires as one of my main data sources may be perceived as problematic in that the responses collected are self-reported and are only as reliable as the honesty, accuracy, and memory of the respondents. Finally, my role as researcher-participant in this study may raise concern regarding bias, despite every effort to remain objective. My close involvement in designing, delivering, participating and researching the collaborative literacy coaching initiative provided me with the opportunity to be fully immersed in the study, but



also may have prevented me from clearly and objectively coding, analyzing and interpreting the findings.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Assertions**

This emic qualitative case study sought to understand what impact, if any, a yearlong Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) initiative had on middle and high school content teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Specifically, the research questions that guided my study were as follows:

1. Do middle and high school content teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching change as a result of participation in a nine month collaborative literacy coaching initiative, and if so how?
2. What aspects of this nine month collaborative literacy coaching initiative contributed to middle and high school content teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching?

The following chapter presents an overview of assertions for each of the two research questions, then introduces each of the three participants as unique case studies. Their collective story led to my assertions. The individual cases begin with an overview of the participant followed by an exploration of how they negotiated change within the context of CLC in response to question one and what aspects of the initiative they perceived as important to the development of their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching in response to question two.

#### **Question One: Changes in the Participants' Efficacy for Literacy Teaching**

Multiple data sources were analyzed and reanalyzed in order to address the first question. Data included, but was not limited to transcripts of weekly CLC cadres, individual teacher interviews, *Initial* and *Follow-up Questionnaires* (see Appendices D

and F) and allowed three middle and high school teachers to describe in their own words how the CLC impacted their sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. The information provided by participants on the *Initial Questionnaire* allowed me to determine that the teachers already held positive general efficacy beliefs. Participants believed that all secondary content teachers could and should impact students' learning through literacy instruction. However, the participants recognized that not all middle and high school content area teachers, including some of their colleagues, embraced this same belief. The participants felt that lack of training contributed to such sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Participants also suggested that some teachers did not see teaching literacy as part of their role, because these teachers believed that they needed to spend class time covering their content.

I was also able to determine, by analyzing the *Initial Questionnaire* (see Appendix D), that the participants expressed mixed degrees of personal sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Although they stated that literacy teaching was important and all but one participant (Katherine) said they knew and already used some literacy strategies, they felt that they lacked confidence in their ability to successfully implement literacy within their content areas. Additionally, the participants all self-reported on their Teacher Information Sheet (see Appendix B) that they desired to learn new or additional ways to make a difference with their students through literacy teaching. Specifically, they were interested in finding ways to address unmotivated and struggling readers.

Upon further analysis and observation of the participants I noticed that they willingly participated in CLC and embraced the role of a learner, among other existing roles and identities that shaped their experiences as they renegotiated their beliefs and

practices within the context of their own classrooms. I noted this in my field notes during the early weeks of the study and throughout the initiative both within CLC cadres and within participants' classrooms, but not limited to these settings. When the multiple data sources were analyzed and reanalyzed the data organized into themes. This process involved reading through all transcripts several times to identify recurring themes and coding the data according to topics or issues that emerged from the data while simultaneously conducting a cross-case analysis looking for similarities and differences, relationships and perspectives that might help answer my research questions. The emergent themes suggested that the participants believed they were responsible for student learning, framed barriers as instructional problems, not student problems, perceived CLC as a tool to help solve instructional challenges, and engaged in the collaborative process to help realize teaching and learning successes. Their participation resulted in increased levels of confidence, which in turn reinforced their already positive general efficacy beliefs and enhanced their personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

Figure 7 provides a heuristic for how the themes emerged from multiple data sources and formed assertion one for the first research question. The data sources included, but were not limited to *Initial Questionnaires*, one-on-one interviews, transcripts of weekly CLC cadres, and *Follow-up Questionnaires*. As I read and reread the transcripts searching for units of meaning from participants' words, I marked examples of personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching using two different colored highlighters, made notes in the margins, and assigned codes. Next, I built a spreadsheet using Excel and created columns to identify and keep track of

key information such as participant, data source, date, quote, notes, code, and theme. This tracking system allowed me to quickly and easily refer back to the original data source so that I did not lose sight of its original context as well as locate and read my related field notes to clarify or deepen understanding of the context from which the participants' words occurred. I copied and pasted the identified quote and entered the other information into their respective columns in the spreadsheet. Following data entry, I was able to sort by inductive code, analyze like codes, and then assign a category or theme. This involved a back and forth process of rereading, recoding, resorting and reassigning themes as I treated the assigned codes and themes as temporary and flexible until I achieved a comfort level with the pattern that emerged such that I could make assertions and adequately address my research questions. The emergent themes are explained in detail as part of each participant's journey throughout CLC.

Next, I provide my multiple-participant case study, which begins with an overview of Margaret, one of the participants. Each participant changed or reinforced their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching in different ways. Their change was individually determined. Timetable, focus, and mode for change varied from teacher to teacher. Additionally, each participants' experience was shaped by complex roles and identities through which they engaged in the CLC process. Data acquired from questionnaires, interviews, and transcriptions of weekly CLC cadres support the emergent themes as expressed in the participants' own words. Due to the connected nature of the four emergent themes and the uniqueness of each participant's story, it was not always possible to describe their journey by teasing out and presenting their changes in a theme-

by-theme fashion. Therefore, I let their experiences guide my writing and looked to their words to tell how they unfolded.

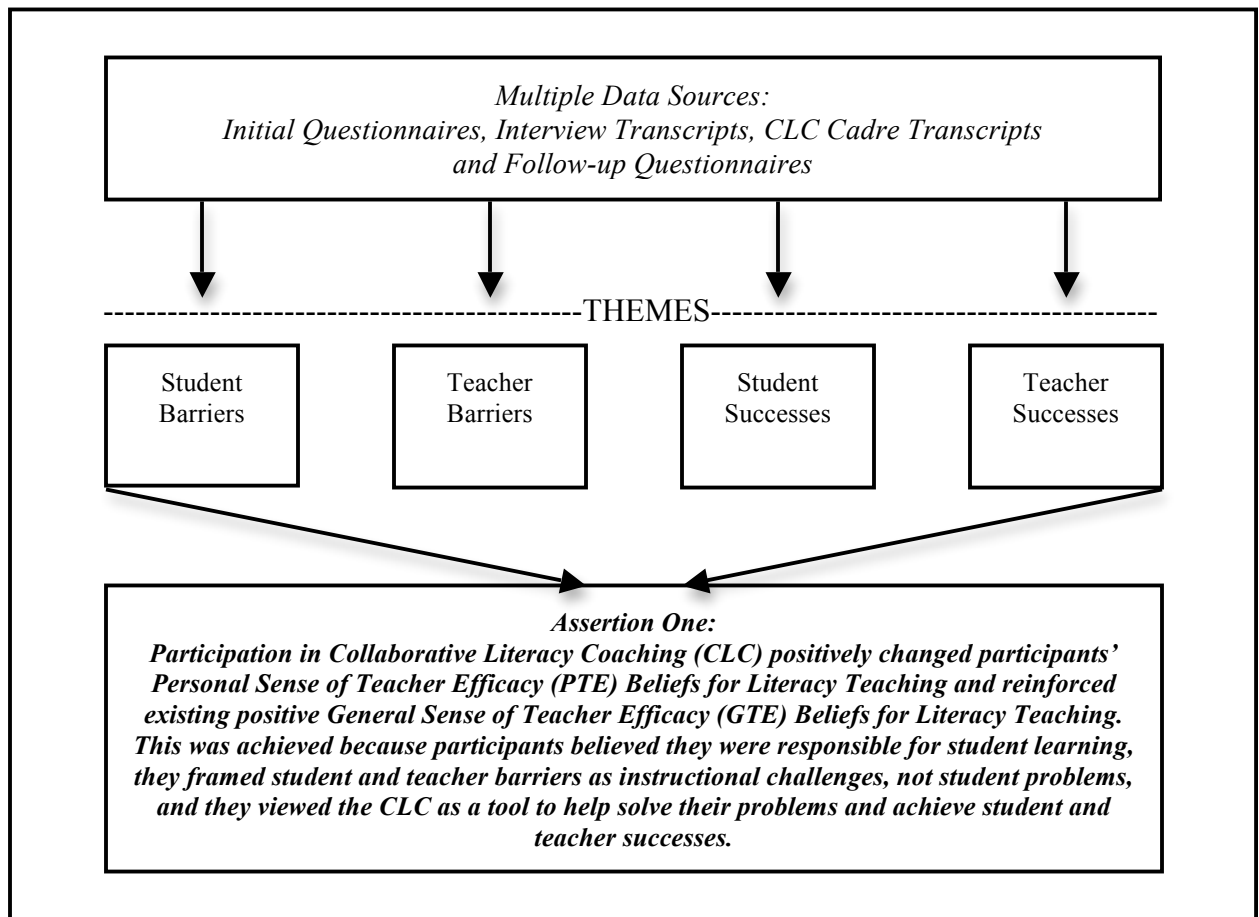


Figure 7. Heuristic for emergent themes to support assertion one.

### **Margaret.**

At the time of this study, Margaret was approaching 40 years old, a wife and the mother of three boys ranging in age from three to thirteen, and beginning her seventh year teaching. Margaret woke each morning in the pre-dawn hours in order to join her husband for an hour-long workout session to a grueling exercise video in their basement before hustling to shower, pack lunches, serve breakfast and drive their three sons to school. She approached her professional obligations and instructional improvement with

the same levels of commitment and intensity that she went about her weight-loss routine and parenting. Margaret was dedicated, focused, and tireless.

Margaret was beginning her third year at Rural Middle School (RMS) when we met. She previously taught first grade at one of the elementary schools within the same district. Now she was working as a sixth-grade teacher as a member of one of two sixth-grade teams. Her team was known as the Cyclones and consisted of approximately 100 students. During first semester, Margaret was assigned a group of 25 students to whom she taught all core subjects and supervised during homeroom. In January at the start of second semester, the Cyclones started rotating by homeroom groups to different teachers for their four core subjects. At this time, Margaret was responsible for teaching language arts to the entire team, plus she continued to meet with her homeroom group of 25 students.

Margaret shared with me that it was a tradition for the Cyclones to wait one semester before students rotated to different teachers, whereas, the other sixth grade team rotated for the entire year. In addition, she shared that this arrangement resulted in the Cyclone team being assigned more students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) as well as students who were considered more immature than those on the other team. The thinking behind this arrangement was to allow more time for students who fit a certain profile to successfully transition from an elementary to a middle school environment. Plus, Margaret noted that the teachers on the other team were more “high school” in their approach anyway and only would agree to teach one subject. So not rotating was not an option.

I could tell that Margaret was at odds with this approach and with some of her colleagues' seemingly adult-focused needs versus attention to student-centered needs. I learned more about her thoughts and feeling on this topic as the year progressed. Margaret expressed that she felt like she spent the first two years at RMS following along, getting her feet wet, and was focused on making sure she was meeting her students needs and getting them ready for seventh grade without babying them too much. Now that she was beginning her third year, Margaret was ready to spread her wings and exercise her voice on her team to influence more of what she thought needed to happen instructionally. To date, she felt that things were done and decisions were made because, "that's the way they've always been done" and not because they had anything to do with what students' need and/or whether or not they connected to best practices. Margaret was motivated to move away from her team's "status quo approach" by making changes within her classroom. Although she felt empowered beginning her third year on this team to make changes within her own classroom, she was somewhat tentative, yet greatly desired, to find a way to nurture change across her entire team, grade-level, and school.

Margaret believed her students' literacy needs included instruction in reading, writing, spelling, language, and literature, but did not know how to fit them together so that they made sense, as well as so everything could be addressed within the 50 minute timeframe that was allotted for language arts. In addition, Margaret was cognizant of her responsibility, not to mention the pressure, to prepare all of her students for success on the state reading assessment. She also felt a duty to "cover" certain material in order to stay in step with her team members that included following a prescribed pacing guide included as part of a new, district-adopted literature series. How to make all of this



happen, while meeting the instructional needs of her students, were at the core of questions Margaret asked within her CLC cadre from the very beginning and remained the focus of her CLC experience throughout the year.

Margaret's role as a mother influenced her CLC experience. She made connections to what she was learning and trying as a part of CLC to her own children's literacy instruction, experiences, and development. As a mother, she naturally and comfortably nurtured her students and was attentive to their individual needs. Her classes, especially her homeroom group, were treated like they were a family as evidenced by quotes in which Margaret discussed students as individuals with special talents and unique needs. Her role as a mother made her compassionate to and protective of her students, which was apparent in the way she spoke about all of her students, even her most challenged. She felt a strong responsibility to teach and support them in their literacy development in a manner she wanted and expected for her own children.

Although Margaret spoke about barriers that on the surface might have made you think she was pointing to excuses, she really was simply identifying challenges that needed to be addressed and not placing blame. Margaret had a soft heart and wanted to do more to compensate for whatever her students were lacking.

During our initial CLC cadre, Margaret shared several student barriers that she faced. She spoke about issues related to student skills, abilities, behaviors, and more. For example, she recognized that reading abilities interfered with student success when she said:

And then I have some that their reading levels are so low that they have a hard time following me. A lot of them are pulled out of my class for

reading but they come back in for science and world history. And so, that's why I'm reading it [the textbook] to them. (Cadre, 9/6).

Yet despite low reading levels, she did not give up or simply place blame. Instead, Margaret mentioned what she was currently doing to help when she said, “that’s why I’m reading it [the textbook] to them.” In addition to reading abilities, Margaret realized that other issues presented challenges. However, she was reluctant to blame students for the issues, rather acknowledged that they were learning her expectations. She stated:

I have some issues. I can't, you know, we do group work, but it's a big job to keep them on task. Right now, especially since it's the beginning of the year, and they don't, you know, they're still learning exactly what I expect. (Cadre, 9/6).

When asked to clarify whether or not the “issues” were behavior issues, Margaret responded, “Behavior issues,” and then provided the following explanation:

If I have them read on their own for independent reading, I have those that are tearing up papers in their desk. I mean it's another behavior issue. You have to pull out a book or they forgot it in their lockers, or they say, ‘I don't want to read,’ you know. Those kinds of things. (Cadre, 9/6).

Margaret recognized that student behavior was a problem. She recognized that management practices that worked with past classes were not working with her current students. Margaret shared with her cadre what she did to create a community of readers in her classroom and acknowledged challenges she faced when she said:

My policy in my room after lunch until everybody is in the room they need to take out their book and read silently. They read until everyone is

back from bathroom break and lunch. That class [last year] would always do it. I gave out so much candy that year...This year I can't even get it--I mean, I've given candy to three people and usually they pick up on the candy. This class is so sugar oriented you would think it would work. No. They are still crawling on their knees under the desks, running around the room, or, 'Oh! Here she comes!' I'm pulling my hair out with them.

(Cadre, 10/11).

Yet, during our first interview, Margaret expressed her belief that the responsibility to create a community of readers fell squarely on the teacher. Although she acknowledged that behavior was a challenge she faced, it did not mean that she blamed students.

Instead, she owned responsibility for their learning and with that came the responsibility to create a community of readers. This included showing students what that looked like, including teaching them how a community of readers behaved. Margaret also acknowledged that she believed that this responsibility extended beyond her classroom and across all classrooms. She said:

I think it comes from the teacher. If the teacher teaches the kids and shows that it is important and makes time for it and you need to read on your own, then the kids are going to take it more seriously. When it's time to read, take out the book and read, but it has to happen in every classroom. It's going to have to look like it is important time for every teacher. It's going to have to happen in the other rooms as well.

(Interview, 10/11).

Margaret attributed behavior problems to student maturity levels or connected maturity levels to other aspects of student learning. For example, during Margaret's first interview, she mentioned student maturity levels when responding to a question about her students' reading abilities. Margaret stated:

I have a big range [students' abilities] and overall this year they are very young. Very immature. The last two years my classes have been a little more mature. These guys are real--you know, they are still into Barbie Dolls and they are still into stuffed animals. They are not into older things right now. I do have maybe three students that are a little more mature. (Interview, 10/11).

Although Margaret was frustrated by various student barriers that she identified (such as skills/abilities, behavior/attitude issues related to maturity-levels and motivation-levels, home environment/support, and text difficulty), from the beginning she desired to find ways to overcome them via instructional practices that lend themselves to what she believed contributed to student success. During her first CLC cadre when asked to identify obstacles to students' literacy achievement, Margaret made a connection to an article we just read and discussed. She stated:

I know. In my classes, it goes back to what this article [Allington, 2002] says. The text is too hard. And that they're struggling over what the word is, like, I'm looking for the word 'obviously.' They would be going, 'ob-vee, ob-vee,' you know, trying to sound out the word not even understanding what it means. (Cadre, 9/6).

Then, during the following CLC cadre, Margaret identified a potential solution to one of the existing barriers (student abilities) that she had identified and asked to learn more about the integrated phonics, spelling, and writing program, *Words Their Way* (WTW) (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2007). While reading and discussing an article by Ivey and Broaddus (2000), Margaret stated:

I would be interested in it [learning more about WTW] anyway, because we do vocabulary things and we do a spelling unit each week and we try to have them write in their journals and I tend to teach phonics when I do spelling because, I guess---these spelling patterns, they still don't know all the vowel patterns. But anyway, I would be interested in that. (Cadre, 9/13).

Margaret noticed a favorable mention of this program while reading the article and during our discussion asked me about it. After a brief overview, she stated she would like to know more because she recognized that WTW might be a possible solution to one of her existing student barriers. By reframing a student barrier into an instructional challenge, Margaret was determined not to let challenges undermine her efforts to support student success.

Margaret also was not to be deterred by teacher barriers of which time was identified as her biggest enemy. Other teacher barriers that posed challenges for Margaret included a new textbook, unrealistic curriculum pacing expectations, and her sixth grade teammates' "status quo" approach to teaching and learning.

Margaret instinctively knew that some of the current programs and practices she used were not working the way she would like them to, but could not "put her finger on"

or specifically describe how or why they should be different. During cadre meetings on September 13 and 27 she discussed curriculum and instruction pacing requirements for the new literature textbook and the mathematics program, noting or expressing concern that there was not enough time to address students' needs. First she shared:

We have new literature books this year so we're still trying to figure them out. Their time frame for some of the stories is like 3 days, but we have been averaging a week because they do journal writings with it, we read the story, we do vocabulary things, and summarize a story. Sometimes we do different things. There are QAR questions in the book that I have them do as a group. (Cadre, 9/13)

Then, she added:

Well I can tell you in Math they are planned down to the day. We have to cover this today--we have to cover this today, next day all the way through. There is no free time. For them to cover the standards they need before they go into high school it's planned out to the day. They don't have 15 minutes to give up out of their class if they want to teach what the state [omit] says they have to teach. (Cadre, 9/27)

She articulated generically what she wanted to see and/or what she thought needed to be different. For example, during a discussion about the article, *Tailoring the fit: Reading instruction and middle school readers* (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000), Margaret offered the following response to a question regarding what is needed for her "fit":

I would love to have longer time for them to read independently in my room, because I read to them, and I think that's important too---I would

like for them to do, you know, read their own book, but have an activity for them to do afterwards. Like, okay, you've read this book, now do one of these summary things, or something like that to show me that they're not just reading the words, that they're comprehending, or how, you know, a character sketch, or this, or that, but it's just finding the time for them to do that and as soon as you get done with your book, you do your little thing to go with your book---but still having time where I could read them a different book, where they could listen and picture in their minds, because I think they need to just to disengage. (Cadre, 9/13)

However, as time and participation in the CLC progressed, Margaret was able to more specifically articulate what, why, and how instruction needs to be done differently. Yet, finding time and figuring out how to “balance” life and school responsibilities in order to learn and implement desired instructional changes were challenges Margaret negotiated her way around. As she stated:

This is the most stressful year I've ever had between balancing work and home--I don't know what it is about this year, but everything's criss-crossing and overlapping, so I'm like, I've gotta be here, I've gotta be there. I've gotta get that done there, I've gotta--So it's kind of a balance and more of what I'm able to handle this year more than anything else. (Cadre, 9/6).

As Margaret indicated, it was not a matter of whether she wanted to try new practices; instead it came down to how much change she was able to take on.

Margaret viewed developing student success as her primary role and fully accepted responsibility for this charge. She was clear about what she believed contributed to her students' success. For example, Margaret identified various reading, writing and study skills and behaviors she felt were important such as motivation to read independently, ability to identify important details from text, read fluently, and take notes to name a few. She also expressed various tools, particularly textbooks that were at students' instructional levels and choice reading materials that were of interest to students and at their independent reading levels. Margaret believed that students needed to learn how to take responsibility for their own learning and teaching them how to do this was an important part of what she worked to accomplish. Students' maturity-levels were also key to adhering to Margaret's classroom expectations for learning. Margaret believed that a strong home-school connection was important for supporting student success. In situations where students' positive home environments were lacking, rather than use this as an excuse or place blame, Margaret attempted to pick up the slack and provided additional support and/or compensated for what was missing.

During initial CLC cadres, Margaret shared her beliefs about what was necessary for student success as well as expressed various reading goals that she had for her students. For example, she believed that students needed to be both motivated to read as well as possess skills to be able to search for and select books that they wanted to and were able to read. She stated:

Well, I would like them to be motivated to read books on their own that they like. I want them to, you know, when they go to the library, pick out a



book that they really like. And when they have spare time, get out the book and read it. (Cadre, 9/6).

Margaret recognized that her students, in general, were not motivated to read and might not know how to find a book they would enjoy from the school library. However, she believed she could change that. As a result, she identified motivation and selection of text as instructional areas to learn more about and goals for her students to achieve.

In addition to knowing how to select interesting text to read and being motivated to read independently, Margaret identified other literacy goals that she believed contributed to student academic success. In the following statement, Margaret noted that she wanted students to possess the skills necessary for note-taking so that students were successful in her class, in seventh grade, and beyond. She said:

I need them to be able to go back through the text and pick out the important parts. Pick out the important information. You know, and know that I am not just putting words on the board; I'm getting that from the book. And how to go about finding that. So that when they get to 7th grade and they start reading, they'll know how to take their own notes or how to, you know. (Cadre, 9/6).

Margaret believed several factors contributed to teacher success, primary amongst them were aspects of instruction. More specifically, Margaret frequently identified what about instruction she believed worked for her and for her students. For example, Margaret felt that instruction needed to engage students, address their individual needs, and be delivered in an explicit, step-by-step manner that made sense to students and at a pace that matched their understanding. Margaret knew that instruction meant more than

“assign and assess” and she worked hard to figure out how to break this cycle that she feared she had been thrown into as a result of existing barriers such as a new textbook, curriculum pacing demands, and more. On the *Initial Questionnaire*, Margaret acknowledged that she did not know as many strategies as she would like, but expressed interest in learning more. Even though Margaret was clear about components of good instruction, she did not know how to make it happen or where to look to find examples that matched how she felt it should be in her gut. Nonetheless, when she read, observed, or heard about it, she knew in an instant that it was what she was searching for and needed.

From the beginning of the CLC initiative, Margaret committed to improving her instruction for her students’ benefit. In addition, Margaret did what she could to alter her existing instruction so it more closely resembled what she believed was necessary for student and teacher success.

By the middle of the year, Margaret still expressed concern about various student barriers. However, by this time she had increased her knowledge base around topics of interest and started implementing several new practices within her Language Arts classroom. As a result, whenever Margaret mentioned barriers they were within the context of what she was or was not noticing in terms of student skills, abilities, and work as part of the new practices she was trying.

For example, during Margaret’s second interview, I asked her how she thought the new writing practices that she was trying as part of introducing a Writer’s Workshop approach in her classroom were working to address students’ use of conventions. Conventions were a student barrier Margaret previously identified and which she hoped

to address as part of her new practices. She explained, “Well, some of them, I guess, when they are doing their writing, some aren't putting their capitals in and they're not using their commas.” (Interview, 1/24). She went on to say:

We do daily edits. I thought maybe on Tuesdays since I have a sub, it would be really easy if they just stayed up with keeping up on their grammar stuff, commas, apostrophes, all that stuff they need. I'm going to let them do one assignment out of the book [textbook] a week. Then the rest of the time, concentrate on this writing. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret had already shared with me ways in which she was pleased with several aspects of her students' writing as a result of her early efforts to implement a Writer's Workshop approach in her classroom. However, her above comments indicated that she did not believe it was adequately addressing students' use of writing conventions. Since she believed proper use of conventions was necessary for student success (“all that stuff they need”), Margaret figured out a plan to address this ongoing problem by merging use of an existing practice (daily edits) with her new practices (workshop approach). However, knowing that Margaret had not yet incorporated any mini-lessons that targeted conventions into her workshop lessons or that she might not know that this is a possibility or how it might look/work, I wanted to push her thinking on her ongoing challenges related to conventions in order to explore possible solutions.

When asked why Margaret thought teaching grammar lessons from the textbook and/or use of daily edits were not carrying over into students' writing, she said:

I don't know. I don't think they're all that lazy. I just think that they think, ‘Oh, I only have to do that for daily edit’ and they get used to their own

writing and they get so busy that they just don't do it. I want them to carry it all the way through. So, any suggestions? (Interview, 1/24).

Even though Margaret was unsure about what to do in order to eliminate this student barrier, she did not find fault in her students. Rather, she reasoned why she believed students were doing what they were doing ('Oh, I only have to do that for daily edit' and they get used to their own writing and they get so busy that they just don't do it."), expressed what she thought necessary for success ("I want them to carry it all the way through"), and was open to other ideas ("So, any ideas?"). Even though the problem was ongoing, Margaret owned her students' success and, therefore, was interested in identifying whatever practice would work be it daily edits and weekly grammar lessons or something new. Margaret was open to problem-solving with me, her literacy coach, and engaging in the CLC process to identify, try, and refine practices that addressed her instructional challenges. In addition, she used her sense of humor to cope with stress that accompanies change.

For example, I had a professional text about teaching mechanics within Writer's Workshop that I wanted to share with Margaret at the right time knowing that Margaret was interested in this area of instructional improvement. However, I was hesitant to share the book prematurely so as not to add too much to Margaret's plate too fast. Because the topic came up during the interview, I thought she'd mention the book to Margaret to determine whether or not it is something she was ready to borrow. The following transcript excerpt not only shows Margaret's interest, but her sense of humor too.

*Kathy:* I have a surprise I'd like to pass along [showing Margaret the book], but I don't want to break your back if it's too much and you don't think you're ready for it."

*Margaret (quickly replies):* It bends. We'll just bend it. I'm just so excited about this stuff! This spelling has been awesome. The writing has been fun so I can't wait to move on because we're doing poetry.

(Interview, 1/24).

Margaret was not only focused on how student work informed her instruction related to grammar, conventions, and usage. When I asked her whether she thought student work informed other aspects of her instruction, she replied, "Yes, I think so." (Interview, 1/24). She went on to say:

Because if they're not getting it---I had one kid not get anything written down in his memoirs and I think memories are too hard for him. Too painful for him to write about. So maybe I'll come up with something else for him. Something that is not so painful as his memories. (Interview, 1/24).

Not only is this excerpt an example of how student work informed Margaret's thinking around modifying an assignment, it illustrates how her role as a mother influenced her role as a teacher. Rather than blame this student's home environment for his inability to complete an assignment and assume he is incapable of writing, Margaret wanted to identify an alternative assignment and protect her student from additional emotional pain. Her identity as a teacher included being compassionate, protective, and nurturing to her students in the same way she identified with her own children in her role as a mother.

*Words Their Way* (WTW) (Bear, et al., 2007) was another new instructional practice that Margaret worked to incorporate in her classroom at the start of second semester. Margaret previously identified vocabulary development as an aspect of literacy she believed was important for student success in all content areas. In addition, she believed low vocabulary skills/abilities were an existing barrier many of her students faced. As she worked to implement WTW, Margaret started noticing during small group instruction that her students lacked sufficient vocabulary knowledge. During our second interview Margaret shared:

I am surprised at how many words they don't know. In fact, I was talking to Mrs. Welling, the para that helps me out in the morning, because we, in our spelling group today, we had the words fur and fir. They didn't know what a fir tree was. They didn't know fir! They knew fur was animal fur or something furry, but they didn't know fir so we looked it up and they were like, 'Oh!' I have really noticed that there little blank spots in their vocabulary from their spelling. But I will have to say, I am so excited because last week and this week, the lowest grade I gave on their spelling tests was a B. And the week before that, when I was still doing the old spelling, I had an F. I did! I had three F's. (Interview, 1/24).

Although Margaret was alarmed that gaps existed in her students' vocabulary knowledge, she was encouraged that WTW was positively impacting her students' spelling skills. Additionally, Margaret used the information about her students' vocabulary skills to inform her instruction as evidenced by comments she shared with her colleagues.

During CLC cadre, Margaret mentioned her students' vocabulary challenges. She said:

Even in WTW, when you have to sit and talk about the spelling words and they have to decide what pattern it goes with and then 'Give me a sentence with it', they're looking things up in the dictionary. But even their sentences, I've had to say, 'Expand on that. Make that sentence longer.' They'll have *scar*. They'll say, 'I have a scar.' 'Okay, you have a scar where? What is a scar?' I've had to make them expand on the sentence. They're just real short. (Cadre, 2/28).

Despite identifying a barrier, Margaret believed in her ability to impact student learning through her instruction. She prompted her students to expand their sentences in order to elaborate on the meaning of vocabulary words and experiment with use of more complex sentence constructions.

In a different example of how Margaret used student work to inform instruction, she explained to me why she had students perform a "cut and paste sort" as well as what she learned as a result during her second interview. Margaret explained:

It's just to see if they were listening in the [small] group and to see if they really understood the patterns of what we were talking about. So I can see from this one, he has three words that he missed. He put brush under oddball instead of under the short 'u' sound. He put true under short 'u' because it has a 'u,' but it's really an oddball. Then he put sew under 'ew' because he was just looking at the pattern but he wasn't listening to the

sounds. So that tells me kind of where he is and what he did. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret's positive PTE for literacy teaching as a result of using WTW was also demonstrated during her second interview with me. In her response to a question about why Margaret believed her students were scoring better on their weekly spelling tests since implementing WTW, she not only shared her thoughts about why but she also showed how she was using small group instruction to positively impact a specific student barrier, low vocabulary skills. Her response was as follows:

I think they are looking at the patterns and they're learning what the words mean because on the pattern this week we had the word 'sew' and I had a couple of kids that didn't know what 'sew' was. So I brought in 'so' as a homophone. So I said now when you go and say I am 'so' happy, I don't want you to say you're 'sew' happy. We talked about the different meaning. But they didn't know that 'sew' was taking a needle and thread to 'sew'. I'm just shocked! I'm shocked about how much they didn't know about vocabulary! I just assumed that they would know what sew was. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret continued to pay attention to student work in order to inform her instructional practices throughout the school year. In addition, she continued to reframe student and teacher barriers as instructional challenges that were necessary to overcome in order to fully support student success.

Time continued to be an ongoing barrier for Margaret and her desire to implement



WTW in all of her language arts sections. When Margaret learned that she would not be able to tweak her team's schedule in order to accommodate the amount of time necessary to implement WTW across all sections, she was not deterred from her goal. Margaret felt empowered to make it work with her homeroom group and do the best she could to squeeze it into her other sections. Additionally, she was motivated by student success as she worked to implement WTW and kept moving forward despite time or other barriers she encountered.

Margaret found out prior to semester break that schedule changes were not going to be made that would accommodate her ability to teach WTW to all sections of students on her team. She shared the news with her CLC cadre stating:

I talked to our team leader and it [schedule change] is not working out that way. I don't get to teach all the kids spelling. I only get my class. So I thought I am doing this different program and I would like to see how it goes and if they want to continue on with the other spelling book fine but I am going to try this. I thought that I could incorporate it with my language time because in the past I had my class at the end of the day and then that extra study hall time when everyone else is supposed to be doing spelling too. So I thought I would be able to do my workshop and all that but not now because they mixed it all up I have my class that I teach language to from 8-8:45 in the morning. I don't get that next time to do the spelling. (Cadre, 12/13).

Not only did scheduling changes prevent the creation of a ninety-minute literacy block Margaret hoped to carve out, but it also presented barriers to implementation of WTW

with her section of students and prohibited implementation with the other sections. Margaret believed WTW would positively impact all students and regretted not being able to use it with everyone. However, she was determined to make it happen for her homeroom.

However, when we met for our second interview, Margaret expressed her frustration with time/scheduling challenges that she faced as part of implementing WTW. For example, when I asked Margaret what she was noticing as a result of her instructional changes she was quick to reply:

I wish I had more time with them. That's what I'm noticing. I want them all on the same program. That would be so much easier for me because then they would all know what I am talking about in every class. And I'm finding that I have to stop and back up and stop and teach a different lesson to my language arts classes so they can catch up with my class. I'm going all over the place. (Interview, 1/24).

Even though Margaret expressed that scheduling changes/more time would allow her to have all of her students “on the same program” and as a result make things “much easier” for her, accommodating her adult needs were not at the center of her comments. As other comments revealed, Margaret was frustrated about time/schedule barriers because she believed WTW and other new practices she was experimenting with had the potential to positively impact all students. Having students “on the same program” would allow all of her students to benefit from the new practices she was implementing. For example, Margaret shared:

They really are working pretty hard. I keep going back and forth because this writing stuff I've been doing in language and then the reading I've been trying to get done in reading and I haven't had enough time. And some of the reading I want to share during writing so it's scheduling . . . I really don't teach reading to everybody but it's good stuff that I want them all to know it. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret struggled to find ways to make her existing schedule work that she believed lent itself to a fragmented approach to English/Language Arts instruction and that was also seriously lacking in available instructional minutes. As her literacy coach, I struggled to keep track of the piece-part schedule her team hobbled together, and, at times, grew weary helping Margaret identify possible solutions to schedule/time barriers, which only made me marvel more at Margaret's determination to do right by all kids and her perseverance to overcome any challenge she faced, especially those related to her schedule/time.

Margaret demonstrated her desire to help not only her homeroom students, but other sections as well when brainstorming ideas for how to incorporate additional word study into her instruction. She said:

That could be, 'Go back now and word hunt.' Except for the kids that I have in language, I don't have them in spelling always. In my class I do. But it seems like there's not enough time. But in my language arts class, I don't have them in spelling and those kids are really struggling with that . . . (Interview, 1/24).

Again the schedule was a problem, but so was lack of time. Not only did Margaret not have enough time to squeeze more in on top of the spelling instruction she added to her homeroom section of language arts, her other sections of language arts received their spelling instruction from one of her other team members. Still, Margaret recognized a need and expressed concern that her other sections were “really struggling with that” [spelling].

As previously mentioned, Margaret had a clear idea of what literacy skills and abilities she wanted her students to master by the end of sixth grade. Of primary importance to Margaret was her student’s ability to learn how to take responsibility for their own learning. In other words, she was interested in her students gaining skills that enabled them to engage in the process of learning as much as she wanted them to know the “right” answer. Margaret was also specific about what type of instruction she felt contributed to student success. For example, Margaret believed that instruction needed to be student-centered, engaging, and flexible enough to target a wide range of student needs. In addition, she believed that good instruction should emphasize the process as much as or more than it does the product. By the middle of the initiative, Margaret was on her way to implementing various new literacy practices within her classroom. Margaret revealed her thoughts about student success through conversations about the new practices she was trying.

For example, when asked during her second interview to explain how she thought using a workshop approach fit with how students learned, Margaret replied:

It's step by step. It introduces things very slowly step by step and that's what they need. Here's a little part and here's a little part and then before

they know it they have all the pieces to the puzzle and then they get it and then, 'Oh!' (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret also talked about the benefits of incorporating rotations of teacher-led small, flexible, ability groups into her classroom. Specifically, she shared what she would say to a colleague who was concerned about classroom management that might result when working with a small group while the other students worked independently. She said:

I think that when you open it up and you allow them to work on their own, they take a little bit more credit for what they are learning. They have to be responsible for their learning. They sit down and they do what they are supposed to do. They are responsible. It's making them more responsible for it. I think they learn more because they're the ones doing the work. It's not everybody do this together and I'm going to pass this out. You're not keeping them on a group pace. They are allowed to go at their own pace and if they need to go faster they can. If they need to go slower they can. But they're learning. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret's response supported her beliefs about what was necessary for student success. Helping students learn to take responsibility was a goal Margaret had for her students and was something she believed they needed to be able to do in order to be successful in sixth grade and beyond. Her new literacy practices were helping her to achieve this goal.

In addition, Margaret shared her thoughts about her students' reactions to her new approach to spelling instruction, WTW. She observed:

They are excited to come back and meet in the [small] group. They are ready. They'll ask if it is their turn yet. They are watching me to see when

it is their time to come back here. They are engaged is what I am seeing.  
(Interview, 1/24).

Margaret continued by describing a time her students engaged in a speed sort and how she rewarded them for their efforts. She shared:

Everybody was standing in the whole class except one boy and he was kind of shuffling them around and they were like, 'Come on Michael! Come on Michael!' They were all rooting for him. And then he got them all done and he goes, 'Yes, I'm done!' And I gave him a Jolly Rancher for being the last one . . . I gave candy for being the fastest, for being the slowest, the person who has improved the most or I did have one person who got all of their sorts correct . . . Of course, I bait them with candy. But they have been really excited about it. Whereas, before they were like, 'Do we have to do our spelling workbook?' We have fun. And they weren't learning the words before and now they are. So I'm anxious to see how they did this week. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret was pleased that her students were excited about her new approach to spelling instruction. She noted that they were engaged, motivated by the speed sorts and candy rewards, and combined fun with learning. The example in the above excerpt of Margaret's class encouraging Michael during the speed sort illustrates how this new practice fostered student engagement and team (family) support for one another. In addition, the above excerpt shows how Margaret's identity as a teacher was informed by her role as a mother when she rewarded her student for being the last place winner during a speed sort. Margaret believed that instruction that promoted important factors such as

individual and class engagement, fun, and support contributed to student learning and success.

Not only did Margaret notice positive changes during spelling instruction, but she also recognized some as a result of her new writing practices. She noticed that students were more interested, engaged, and reacted positively to practices such as sharing their writing. Margaret explained:

We always do some of that [sharing] at the beginning of the next class period. They share for five minutes about what they wrote and then we come back together. Today I was asking them which question was the hardest for them to answer. We talked a little bit about that. But they love to share their stuff. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret also noticed that her new practices were breaking the “assign and assess” cycle, which resulted in students writing and discussing more during class time rather than outside of class time as homework assignments. She stated:

I get them doing things and they're writing more and they're thinking about things more and they don't even know that they're doing anything. They're like, ‘What was our assignment today Mrs. Welling?’ I said, ‘Well you did all this writing.’ But they're so used to having to read this and turning in an assignment. They're getting into discussions and writing more. And they are taking notes and they are just so interested. I've been putting everything up on the overhead and I've been making copies and we've been writing down things together . . . They've been writing things in their [writer's] notebooks. (Interview, 1/24).

Ultimately, Margaret is most pleased that her new practices resulted in student success for her diverse range of student learners. She recognized that her new instruction both increased learning and built student confidence. Margaret was impressed that WTW taught students to recognize and think about spelling patterns, rather than memorize words. When asked whether she believed her students' increased performance on weekly spelling tests had to do with selecting easier words, Margaret replied:

No, I think they're doing better on this test because they understand how the patterns go. And they're thinking about it more and they are talking about it in their groups and they're even talking about it when they go back and sort on their own. They'll say, 'You know what? She said that if it makes a sound at the end, it's a spelling.' So I'm just impressed. Really impressed! (Interview, 1/24).

She went on to share another reason why she was impressed. Margaret stated:

I am impressed because some of the kids in my group go to Mrs. Donnellans' special education class for reading and they were in there for language too so they haven't always done spelling with me. They are atrocious spellers. Even those kids have gotten A's on the last two spelling tests. I am amazed that when we sit down and talk about the vocabulary and what they don't know and how little they know with the vocabulary. By the end, they understand that and I think that's a good factor that their vocabulary is increasing. I think that this program meets them where they are and works with what they know or what they don't know and it starts them off there. Whereas, the other program that we



have been looking at are on the 6th grade level. [Shows me a spelling list from another program] These are the words that we have for this grade level and it starts off there. Well, not all of the kids are up to sixth grade level, which is beginning above their heads to begin with. I really like the way this program tested them to see where they were and then decided on the groups and placement . . . Meeting them where they are and taking them from there, rather than just starting with Chapter One. (Interview, 1/24).

In the above excerpt, Margaret was able to articulate what about her new approach was working when she stated that it, “meets them where they are and works with what they know or what they don't know and it starts them off there.” (Interview, 1/24). From the beginning of the year, Margaret knew instinctively what she wanted for her students and recognized that a whole group, teacher-centered textbook approach was not delivering. However, she did not know how to go about making changes. Seeing aspects of her new practices that she believed contributed to student success in action contributed to Margaret’s increased confidence and positive PTE beliefs for her literacy teaching. Not only did Margaret’s confidence increase, but also she recognized that her new practices contributed to her students’ increased confidence.

Margaret noted student benefits as a result of using WTW when sharing the following during a CLC cadre meeting:

And then I've seen having them talk [during small group] that it builds self confidence, because I would divide them up into groups according to their ability for spelling and in my lower group the kids that I have in there,

there are a couple that would be really low for the whole class but when they are a group they are getting some attention and they are like a neat group. And they are like taking the initiative to look things up in the dictionary or ask their own questions and the rest of the class, the rest of the group, is like, 'Oh yeah.' They get to talk about it with people that are all kind of on the same level and in that they're just finding confidence, I think. (Cadre, 2/21).

In the following excerpt, Margaret expressed how change is both challenging and rewarding. She said:

I'm burnt out but I'm excited. Because this part with my class is going so well and I've had fun teaching it. But I'm learning as I go, which always makes it hard work. Because I'm reading the writing book and trying to do the lessons for that. And then I'm doing the spelling and trying to stay ahead of the class on that. The other stuff--we haven't finished our ICEPAC lessons and summarizing. I think I'm just a little bit behind on that because we've had things come up--fire drills, MAP testing, and things like that, which just throw a kink in what I'm trying to teach throws me off a day over the lessons that you and I had planned. (Interview, 1/24).

Although Margaret was pushing her physical limits, she was energized. Student success energized her. When asked whether she believed her hard work was paying off, Margaret responded:

It is though. I'm having fun with it and I think they're having fun with it. I think that shows. If you're having fun, then the kids are like, 'Oh, okay,' and they have fun. Your attitude shines through on what you do. I always had to act like I was really excited about volcanoes. 'Oh guess what? We're going to learn about explosions today.' I'm thinking, 'Oh gosh.' [makes a face that conveys dislike] (Interview, 1/24).

Despite recurring barriers, most notably lack of time, and the fact that all of the hard work associated with making change had taken a toll on Margaret, she kept learning, trying, refining, and forging ahead. The more Margaret's students exhibited signs of success, then the greater were her feelings of teacher success. Whether Margaret was sharing how her new practices were going during CLC cadre or one-on-one with me while coaching her, she all but bubbled over with excitement as she spoke about the success she experienced. Primarily noted amongst her success was the impact her new practices had on her students' learning.

Margaret expressed her excitement for her new practices and stated what she believed was so powerful about the Writer's Workshop approach that she implemented when she said, "I'm just finding it is really exciting because this is different than what we've been doing and I see that the kids are being really productive and they're actually learning things." (Interview, 1/24). More specifically, she believed that her new approach to writing instruction benefited her diverse range of learners, made her a better teacher and her students better writers, and taught her students to be responsible for their writing and learning.

For example, Margaret started to tell me as her literacy coach about how the workshop approach matched her beliefs about writing instruction and then quickly provided an example of how the new approach allowed one of her diverse learners to be successful. She responded to a question about how her new practices matched her beliefs about writing instruction by stating:

That they're actually writing and they're actually, oh, you know what? I was going to show you--I have this little boy in my class and he's a mess. A mess is the best way to describe him. His family life's a mess and he is just a mess. He doesn't ever come in and want to do anything and he is just grouchy and terrible. But he did the thumbprint thing and he did awesome. He got everything he wrote and he wrote about the color of his eyes and he likes to do puzzles and how his favorite group is IP or P or Mr. P, I don't know, and the Beatles. You wouldn't think he'd ever listen to the Beatles. And how lots of people hate him and how some girls think he's cute. He wrote and wrote and wrote all throughout that thumbprint. It's the most anybody's ever gotten out of him. I'm like, 'Oh my gosh!' So it just opened it up for him and allowed him to pour out what he needed. I'm learning about the students and I think they're learning about themselves and it allows them to be individuals and do their own things. (Interview, 1/24).

The “thumbprint thing” was a lesson Margaret planned together with me to introduce the difference between writing a response to a reading selection and writing a summary of a selection. Margaret was pleased by her student’s success and empowered as a result of

her lesson, because “It’s the most anybody’s ever gotten out of him.” (Interview, 1/24). Positive experiences implementing her new practices with all students, including those from challenging home environments, contributed to increases in Margaret’s PTE beliefs for literacy teaching.

In addition to benefiting her diverse range of learners, Margaret believed her new practices positively impacted her too. During her second interview, Margaret shared how her students improved as a result of her new practices, which led her to discuss how she benefited too. She stated:

When I have them write sentences or draw what it means it's really helping with their vocabulary. I think that they're talking better and writing better and writing more words and more descriptive words. We had the hand on the board last week of the five senses. I just kind of grouped that into what readers want to read. ‘A good reader is going to read your paper and they're going to try to visualize what you're saying and if you don't have those descriptive words or if you don't have.’ And that's another thing I made a poster of descriptive words on my wall. So this is when I start thinking, ‘Oh I should have made that poster.’ I know [reacting to an expressions on my face conveying amazement at Margaret’s energy and drive to push herself to accomplish one more thing] I was up at three in the morning. There are not enough hours to do everything that I want to do. So I'm going to take this summer and do some things and I just keep adding on. And it's made me a better teacher because I will start something and then I'll think, ‘Oh well, I can do this

with it too. Oh! I can do this too.' So next thing I know I've got two weeks of kind of the same thing because I just keep adding.

Margaret continued speaking, but she switched back and forth from sharing ways she noticed how her new practices impacted her students' writing to how she transformed her writing practices. She excitedly recounted lessons that she tried that successfully tackled student barriers (i.e. writing skills and abilities) that she had previously discussed with me as well as what she believed necessary for student and teacher success. She expressed:

And they're all growing! Like when we talked about them not having descriptive paragraphs. I asked them to write something about their neighborhood that wasn't descriptive. And you said why don't you read them some descriptive things and take it from there to their drawing. Well we've done that. We worked backwards . . . So I mean there is just, I mean I'm starting to think of different steps and breaking everything down from step to step. And the other thing is that I want to allow them time to do it in class because I'm finding if they go home they're not going to find a quiet place to sit and write and they're not going to give it the time that it needs. So I've got to make that time for them in here. They've already got--they're homeworked to death by the rest of the team and I don't want it to be that way. Writing, if you make it an assignment where it's treacherous, they're going to hate it. So we just find time in class to do it. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret recognized that her teaching had the power to impact her students' learning. Rather than just expect students to produce the quality of writing she wanted when she knew barriers existed such as lack of a "quiet place to sit and write" or the fact that "they're homeworked to death by the rest of the team," Margaret realized that she was capable of making "time to do it in class." In addition, she realized that student success had more to it than just making time. By thinking of "different steps and breaking everything down from step to step," Margaret believed that her instruction, not an assignment, prevented writing from becoming "treacherous" for her students.

Margaret further supported the argument that her new practices were responsible for positive changes to her students' writing when she talked about how her students used to go about getting ideas for their writing and then discussed how incorporating a modified Writer's Notebook (use of a three-ring binder with specific sections for different aspects of their language arts instruction, including a section for writing ideas) helped students generate writing ideas. First, Margaret addressed how she believed her students used to get writing ideas. She stated, "They were pulling it out of their heads. They'd say, 'We don't know what to write about! We have to write for how long?'" (Interview, 1/24). Then, Margaret shared what purpose she believed the three-ring binders served. She said:

Well it has all of their ideas in there. Their writing territories are in there. Now they have their memories which are in there. We're going to do heart mapping and we're going to put their feelings in there. Then when it comes time to write a poem, I'll say, 'Okay, let's go back to your binders and let's see what subjects you want to write your poems on. You've got

your families, you've got your territories, you've got your feelings and heart mapping.' So it serves as a diving board for them to come up with ideas for their writing. (Interview, 1/24).

Students' positive reactions to binder use also contributed to Margaret's favorable response to this new practice. In addition, use of the binders supported Margaret's desire to help students become responsible for their own learning. When asked during her second interview how the binders were working, Margaret shared:

They're going good. See, [opening up a student's binder to show me] these three ring binders are awesome! I've been making them record their read alouds . . . I think the kids like them. They're keeping track of everything. They get them out and ask if it goes in their notebook. They ask if they can hole punch it for their notebook. And I say, 'Sure!' (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret continued by flipping through different sections of a student's binder and recapping what various entries were and how she went about guiding writing instruction for that particular piece. Sheer delight and pure pleasure were written all over her face and her voice exuded confidence in her new approach to writing instruction as she spoke:

So this was memoir worthy experiences I talked about. Before that we read two memoirs. They didn't even know what a memoir was. So we talked about what a memoir was. It came from your memory and the difference between a biography and an autobiography in the memoirs. So we did that. And then I read a memoir out of the book that she [Nancie Atwell (2002)] had written about her daughter about the first lie she had



told. It was really bad because it started out with facts and the title is too long and we talked about all those things. Then I read her second one and it was really good. Then we came up with all of these things about memoirs that work. So as we talked together, we wrote them down. A couple of kids were gone so they copied it off my thing. They took notes and they put them in their binders. So this is what we came up with [showed me student work]. (Interview, 1/24).

As the year progressed, Margaret gained confidence with each instructional change she made and in her ability to select the right tools she believed were necessary to help her students be successful. Margaret often was concerned about not following the language arts textbook chapter-by-chapter, but she did not believe it was the best tool or provided the best approach necessary to address her students' needs. In the following excerpt, Margaret shared her version of the baking analogy that I often shared with her to illustrate the process of making decisions about which ingredients (specific instructional tools) Margaret might select from her kitchen cabinet (all of the professional resources available to her of which her textbook is one) when she is trying to bake (teach/accomplish) a particular type of cookie, cake, or pie (lesson/instructional goal).

Margaret shared with her CLC cadre:

Before I started this class [CLC cadre] I used to feel like I had to use the textbook to provide the kids with everything out of it. But then I think of Kathy's little analogy that I am creating something in here and to remember my goal. I'm going to do what I am feeling inside of me. If I make chocolate chip cookies, I might not need the peanut butter right now

but use what I need out of the cabinet and use it for my class. (Cadre, 2/21).

With each successful experience implementing a new piece to her language arts instruction, Margaret grew more and more confident and became more assured that using her textbook as one of many tools was not only okay to do, but was the right thing to do.

Margaret was just as much aware near the end of the year as she was at the beginning that student barriers existed. However, just like at the start of the CLC initiative, Margaret did not use existing barriers as excuses or place blame on students or their parents when it came to accomplishing literacy instructional goals. Rather, Margaret, if anything, was even more resigned to do something about existing or potential challenges in order to ensure student success.

Unlike at the beginning of the year when Margaret discussed student barriers, near the end of the CLC initiative her comments were not so much focused on specific skills or abilities that she felt her students lacked. Rather, Margaret seemed more confident that she knew what to do in order to improve gaps that she identified. Over the course of the initiative, Margaret gained confidence in her own literacy instruction as she learned how to address student barriers such as lack of skills and/or abilities through new practices like WTW and Reader's and Writer's Workshop. She also did what she could to support students within her classroom in areas that she felt might be lacking as a result of their home environments. For example, Margaret worked to create a classroom environment that supported students who did not have time, quiet, or parental assistance to complete reading and writing assignments at home.

Therefore, near the end of the CLC initiative, Margaret discussed student barriers within the context of possible solutions, and she focused her energy on expanding her efforts beyond her classroom and her CLC cadre to involve other colleagues within RMS. In the following examples, Margaret discussed the importance of teaching students how to successfully read all text types and the importance of parental support for at risk students. She identified these barriers and shared possible solutions with her CLC cadre.

For example, Margaret worked with me as her literacy coach to plan and incorporate several lessons that focused on teaching students to recognize and navigate through different types of text (narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive). She was pleased with the results and believed it was important to explicitly teach students how to read different types of text as evidenced by her following comments:

And I really like the way that we've been learning walking through the text types. Because before we didn't really think about that and I know from teaching first grade they have to be shown everything. But the text types because before it was always the simple text types, but this was the first time that I'm dealing with the harder text types. And I've taught them how to do notes from science and things like that. How to write their notes and how to get the information out of it. But I didn't ever really show them 'Look at the picture and the picture has a caption and then you might look at.' And I have taught them about the bold and the important words are bold and how to read that but not really all the text types. (Cadre, 4/18).

Margaret realized the benefits of teaching students to notice text features, text structures, and more in order to help them understand a variety of difficult types of text. She also

recognized that her former practices (primarily teaching narrative text) did not match areas where state assessment data indicated students needed help.

In the following example, Margaret identified text types found within content area text as a student barrier and proposed a possible solution to this challenge. She stated:

I think that we spend a lot of time teaching kids how to do narratives and those kinds of things. And then on state assessments where they usually fall down is [*sic*] technical reading and writing, persuasive reading and writing and those kinds of things. Well, maybe just the fact that if we exposed the kids to more of those because content area text are hard. It's hard stuff because not only do you have to understand but there are facts and all those things you're not just reading to enjoy a story. (Cadre, 4/18).

In another example, Margaret identified lack of parental involvement as a barrier to student success and believed that this barrier extended beyond literacy success. She recognized that at-risk students are impacted the most by lack of parental involvement. Margaret said to her CLC cadre:

What I would like to see, what I am sensing, I am struggling with, not necessarily in literacy, but I just think success of students is the lack of parent involvement and I am sure it is in any district but if you go down the line the kids that we are really struggling with, it is the fact that, you know, education isn't a high priority and getting a kid to school is not a high priority. So I would like to, I don't know, see if there is something we could do with some of these at risk kids and getting their parents involved . . . (Cadre, 5/16).

Margaret continued speaking. She wanted to extend support to at-risk students, was ready to reach beyond her classroom walls and enlisted the help of her sixth grade team members. Margaret asked her CLC cadre whether or not she had already told them about a study she recently read. Realizing that she had not, she went on to provide an overview of the work. First, she said:

Umm, there was a report, I don't know, I don't think I have talked to you guys, about this largely successful principal that had gone to a school, no I think I did mention it, he had been there seven years and about, there were only five teachers left in the building because he came in and shook things up so much but I talked to my team about this, the different teachers mentored the kids. They had like 20 kids that they would mentor and they would check with them and it was built into the schedule. They would check in with them on a twice a week basis and they would come to their room and say, 'How are you doing? I want to see your grades' and there would be some way of checking. I wish there would be a way we could incorporate something. I mean it is not just necessarily literacy, but I feel like we have kids that they are just not here and I don't know, maybe I am going off on a tangent. (Cadre, 5/16).

Reading this success story resonated with Margaret and her professional and maternal instinct to nurture and support all students. The study provided a possible solution to an existing student barrier at RMS, inadequate parental involvement and/or home environment. Identification of this student barrier and Margaret's possible solution fit with her identity as both a teacher and a mother. It is consistent with Margaret's

willingness to fill whatever void she identified as a result of her students' home environments (lack of a quiet place to read, write, or study; lack of parental support with homework or school attendance; lack of resources or opportunities such as access to books or a visit to a book store). Furthermore, it highlights the degree to which Margaret owned responsibility for student learning and the extent to which she was willing to go in order to help her students experience success.

Both lack of time and stress associated with making change continued to present challenges at the end of the year. However, neither was capable of getting in the way of Margaret's efforts. As was typical, Margaret acknowledged potential or existing barriers, but chose to focus on possible solutions and/or related positive outcomes associated. For example, even though at times change was difficult or stressful, Margaret found ways to cope and was energized by the benefits her students experienced as a result of her efforts.

Margaret indicated on her *Follow-up Questionnaire*, "Changing what I taught and rearranging my class schedule was a big challenge. I worked with my literacy coach to come up with a new class schedule and worked with my co-teachers." However, Margaret faced other challenges associated with making change such as access to text, substitute teacher coverage, classroom management, and a variety of issues related to time. Margaret recognized that both students and teachers do not have access to the type and variety of texts needed for literacy teaching. She pointed out:

I think what is hardest for me as a teacher, and probably some of the other teachers . . . is finding the text and having access to it ourselves. Kids don't have access to the books and they don't have access to the bookstores and things like that. Well, I don't always know that I have access to all of the

things that I've been able to see this year just because one is time and finding it and going there to find it and knowing where to look. (Cadre, 2/28).

During a different CLC cadre, Margaret expressed concern that she was going to have to use a new substitute teacher for the remainder of the year in order to continue attending our weekly cadre. She explained to her colleagues:

I was telling Kathy I was worried because Mr. McKenna took the job as the para and so I have to use subs starting today, but I don't know if I am going to have her [sub] all the time and the only thing I know about her is that she is called the knitting sub because she gives the assignment and then she knits in the room. (Cadre, 3/7).

Margaret realized that it was a challenge to find high quality substitutes in her small town and especially one who was available to work on a long-term basis. Up to this point in the school year, Margaret was fortunate to have had a substitute who worked well with her and her students and did not cause them to lose instructional time each week by simply “babysitting” students while Margaret participated in her CLC cadre.

Another challenge Margaret faced was related to classroom management. During her third interview, Margaret recounted how it was an initial barrier that she faced while trying to implement WTW. She stated:

The challenge at the beginning was to keep them going. The challenge was that while I'm busy working with the group they have to know enough of what they need to do without coming over and bothering me, which they do. They do a really good job about asking someone else in the

group or if I have my para, she is wonderful, because then she can just field questions or walk around and monitor. And they really get down to business with her walking around with the other two [groups] and me just working with the [first] group. That really helps. The rewards are tremendous, because they're all engaged in some activity that is helping them right where they are. I mean it's really good. (Interview, 4/24).

However, even though she identified a challenge associated with making change, she also stated the benefits of implementing this new practice and believed that the “rewards are tremendous”.

Still, despite benefits, challenges did exist and time, rather, lack of time was one of the biggest. Margaret expressed her frustration with lack of time when she stated:

The time issue has been a big deal for me, because I only have them for fifty minutes. And by the time that they get in and get settled down and we start and I do a lesson and then I give them time to work and then bring them back together at the end it goes so fast. They can't get everything done that I want. My class has been very fortunate, because they have me for a little longer period of time in the morning. So I've incorporated the spelling and vocabulary practice, word play and language and the reading all at once. So for that group of twenty kids they were lucky they got it all at once. But I'm going to do the same thing with the rest of the team and I haven't been able to. So they're either behind in what we're doing with reading or they're behind in what we're doing with language, but I just try to squeeze it in as best I can. (Interview, 4/24).



Lack of time by itself was a problem, but it was exacerbated when behavior issues arose.

Margaret captured how the combination of the two presented challenges when she stated:

Well this having time in 50 minutes though to do a read aloud to really teach my little lesson and then have them or give them time to write and then come back together before they leave. I mean it's just so quick and you have any kind of behavior thing going on. Like Nancy has been gone the last two days so there have been a couple of issues that now I've had to go take care of, which you know pulls me out for few minutes and I'm like wait a minute my lesson is getting messed up. You know that just throws things off. (Cadre, 4/18).

She noted that it “just throws things off,” rather than state that it prevented her from making changes and moving forward. Margaret experienced success and her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching increased, because she was able to work around or reframe potential or existing barriers.

In addition, Margaret reframed barriers as instructional challenges that she believed she could control. Rather than give up or complain that instructional changes required a lot of extra time – first, time to study new practices, next, time to plan and prepare to use new practices, and then, time to implement and refine new practices – Margaret reframed her thinking and stated during her third interview that her new practices required a little more advance planning and organization. She said:

I don't think it's more work as in work, it's just that you have to be better prepared. I have to know exactly what I want that group doing and kind of knowing what I want them doing all week. So I can write that out and

have it ready to go. And then I've got the second group that is different and the third group. So I just think that you have to be better prepared at the beginning of the week. I mean it's not one of those classes where you can just kind of throw it together the day before you know. Like if something would happen and I didn't have it ready Wednesday, I couldn't just come to school on Thursday. I mean I'd have to know. I have to be more organized myself as a teacher and what direction that I want them to go into, especially with the writing. (Interview, 4/24).

However, the extra effort was well worth it in Margaret's opinion, because the payoff was so great. For example, Margaret shared how she responded to her team members and other RMS colleagues who questioned the value of the amount of time and effort Margaret spent making instructional changes and being out of the classroom each week in order to participate in her CLC cadre. She stated:

And my response [to team members and colleagues] is, 'But I've learned ways to be a better teacher and that ten times balances out that little extra prep that I had to do or that group [CLC cadre] time. They see me [referring to her students], they have me, they have me every single day except for this little bit of time. So the benefits far out way that little extra prep time.' (Cadre, 4/18).

Margaret believed in the value of participating in the CLC initiative and was eager to share ideas with her team members and collaborate with her RMS colleagues in other grades too. Time was a barrier that prevented Margaret from collaborating with

others outside of her CLC cadre, despite always trying. She expressed this frustration with her CLC cadre when she stated:

I would love to work with the 7th grade teacher in my class and get my team to go to these classes [CLC cadre] to see---and it is so hard for me in the 20-30 minutes we have at team time to discuss everything we need for team and explain everything covered and included in here because we don't get to sit and talk. (Cadre, 3/7).

Regardless of barriers, including time and opportunity to collaborate with others, Margaret was determined to make changes that she believed supported her students' success. The following excerpt illustrates how the positive changes Margaret made throughout the course of the school year gave her the confidence to stand up to her team members and her principal to fight for what she believed was best for her students. She shared:

And I didn't get to tell you last week, I think it was last Wednesday or maybe it was last Tuesday after you left after school. I was about ready to cry because I went to see Matthew [principal] and he was trying to get me a block of time and it's not going to be able to work. So I was kind of really mad. I was like you know what I went to this training [referring to *Words Their Way* (Bear, et al., 2007) conference presentation] and I learned that my thoughts, my hunch was kind of right and that it [referring to her spelling instruction] does need to change. And I've spent all this effort trying to do it which is not going to go for naught, because I'm still doing it [WTW] next year no matter what. And I've even talked to my

team leader and I told her this, ‘Look, I’ve done all this work and I think it [spelling instruction] needs to change.’ And they [team members] said that they would try and change with me. This is going to be more work with me trying to teach them [team members] how to do it [WTW] than do it myself. You know what I mean? But Matthew was really working on trying to get me a block of time and it didn’t work out. So I don’t get to change the time next year. (Interview, 4/24).

Despite not getting a longer literacy block worked into next year’s schedule, Margaret was determined to move forward and work around, yet, another barrier. She was determined, in part because her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching strengthened as a result of confirmation that her “thoughts” and “hunch” were “right,” indicating a need for change. Margaret recognized that change was hard. But, because she took responsibility for student learning and realized that her students needed more, Margaret was willing to do the right thing and find ways around any potential or existing barrier. She captured the essence of this when she shared:

That is what pushed me out of my comfort zone, because this is scary, you are thinking because if I change this am I going to need to know what I need to know to get them to know what they need to know before they get to seventh grade or am I going to mess everything up, mess all of them up and then when you look at it and think they are not where they need to be anyway, and what I am doing isn’t helping so I have got to do what is best for them and that is to switch over to that. (Cadre, 5/16).

The key to Margaret's increased PTE beliefs for literacy teaching resided in the fact that her students were being successful. Margaret's face lit up as she shared example after example of what was working and how her students were achieving as a result. Not only did Margaret feel that she had achieved her goal of connecting reading and writing, she was pleased that it was evident in their work. She talked about how much more students were writing and how they were talking and noticing spelling patterns with increased interest, confidence, and understanding.

Near the end of the CLC initiative Margaret continued to articulate what she believed necessary in order to support students' literacy success. Included in what Margaret believed was instruction that exposed students to models, provided them with time and opportunities to practice reading and writing, engaged them in the process of learning and figuring out how to take responsibility for their learning through strategy use and transfer, and focused on what they could do and builds from there.

For example, Margaret shared her thoughts on the importance of students having the opportunity to read and write a lot. She said:

The need exposure to it [reading and writing]. They need exposure to all of those different words and print. They need to see the good writing in the books that they see and then they need to have time to practice and not be afraid to fail. And so I really liked the idea that they write everyday-- they do write everyday. They write a little bit everyday. But I don't grade everything. I let them pick out their best one. And some of the things that they've handed in have been fantastic because they're not just all the same assignments. (Interview, 4/24).

As important to student success as having access to models and time to practice reading and writing were Margaret's instructional changes. By the end of the initiative, Margaret approached literacy instruction as a process as evidenced by her new approach to grading. She no longer felt the need to grade everything that she assigned or that students' wrote. Margaret explained more about changes to her approach to writing instruction during her third interview when she said:

It's a learning process. It's more of a process you know 'this is the process that we're going to go through and allow you time to practice it and I'm here if you have questions on it or all the books are here if you need to look something up. And it's okay if it's not right the first time because that's what we're doing we're practicing. And I'm not going to take a grade on that. You get to pick which one you want me to grade.' I think it's just a different approach. It's all new to them because usually it's 'Here's the assignment.' It's either right or wrong and 'You take it home and do it.' So it's not like that [now]. (Interview, 4/24).

Seeing teaching and learning as a process helped Margaret break the "assign and assess" cycle, which led to student success and contributed to her increased PTE beliefs for literacy teaching.

Margaret commented on benefits to her students that she noticed as a result of her new practices, specifically as a result of WTW. She said:

They're talking more. They're noticing things more. They want to be the person to notice the pattern and they want to be the person to figure out the homophones. They are getting excited about it. And when they learn

it it's just a different type of retention more like they have more hands on. They have kind of a role in figuring things out and they are remembering it better. (Interview, 4/24).

The benefits fit with Margaret's beliefs about the type of instruction necessary for student success. Margaret believed that instruction needed to be engaging and interactive so that students had fun while learning. WTW supported this approach to learning and contributed to student success.

Consistent throughout the CLC initiative was Margaret's belief that in order for students to be successful they needed to learn how to take responsibility for their learning. In the following example, Margaret discussed the importance of teaching strategies and students' ability to transfer strategy use as contributing to teaching students how to take responsibility for learning. She commented:

I did do really good with the visualization part because I know that they need to be doing these things in their mind when they are reading. But I was only doing it for one book that I was reading to them. But I think that I've taught them the ways that they can do it themselves with whatever book that they are reading and take more of an initiative. They need to take more responsibility for their learning and it's just not me telling them or me teaching them. They have to find these things out for themselves in all of their books . . . Because this class is not one that wants to take responsibility for their own learning. They will just sit there, you know, and finally they're starting to write and they're starting to write more and

starting to read more and understand that it's an expectation that we're all looking for. (Interview, 4/24).

Margaret set expectations for her students to learn how to take responsibility for their own learning, taught them strategies to assist them in the process, and was pleased that they made progress over the course of the school year towards what she believed was a key component of student success.

By the end of the year so much instructionally came together for Margaret. She believed that she had broken the “assign and assess” cycle and that the new practices she implemented actually matched her beliefs as well as were backed by the professional literature for what were considered best practices. Ultimately, Margaret experienced success, because she felt she achieved her goal of enhancing student achievement. By engaging in the CLC process, Margaret reframed a deficit model approach to instruction to one that took into consideration what students knew and could do and built from there. Margaret described what she changed, what she learned, and the benefits of doing so in her own words.

First, Margaret shared how she moved away from textbook-driven, teacher-centered instruction and what she learned as a result. She said:

I think there has [*sic*] been a lot of changes, because I've learned that I don't have to go, I'm not bound by those textbooks that they give you. I have certain things that I want to teach them . . . But they need to be shown. I think we do more modeling and more taking from different things and not just that textbook. And even the way I grade has changed because it's not just the grading isn't just to see where they are. I mean the



grading is not just to give them a grade, 'Oh you didn't do this.' It's more to see what they don't know and where I need to go next. How I need to change my teaching to see where they are and help them to get what they need to get . . . And slow down. . . The pace is not right and kids aren't learning things. You've got to slow down and back up and make it enjoyable and talk. It's more talking. We talk more. (Interview, 4/24).

Margaret was pleased by the changes she made, which contributed to increases in her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching. As the above excerpt demonstrates, Margaret believed her instruction was key to impacting student learning. For example, she explained that student assignments informed, "How I need to change my teaching to see where they are and help them to get what they need to get." (Interview, 4/24). Through this statement, Margaret links student learning to her teaching. Margaret noted other aspects of instruction that she believed she controlled such as the pace and time for students to discuss what they were reading and writing.

The changes Margaret experienced were not accidental. They were the result of goals she set for herself and achieved, in part, as she explains below through support she received through participation in the CLC process. Margaret recognized that her changes were part of a process that was still ongoing. She shared:

I wanted it to be more of a reading vocabulary language room. Reading, writing, language, words, word study. I want it to be more like that. And in the past you know I've been trying to get books but they're hard and it's a slow process and I'm still in the process of getting more books for them. And I really do want to do more with reading and what readers do and that

was wonderful all of the things I've learned and connect the two. Because I felt like before they weren't connected. It was like reading was totally separate and writing was totally separate and then the spelling was just floating around wherever we could fit it in. And the spelling had nothing to do with any other part and the kids were failing at it and their words were not very advanced. They had no vocabulary. And so that is what I see changing because you've helped me put them all together and shown me a way to address it. (Interview, 4/24).

Before describing instructional changes Margaret made over the course of the year, she used humor when responding to my concern for how hard she had been working and encouragement to take care of an eye irritation before it escalated. Margaret quipped, “Oh no I won't have pink eye, I'll have coffee eye.” (Interview, 4/24). They both laughed, then Margaret stated:

So anyway I just think that it's been more of a focus on words and reading and language and writing. I don't know I've had fun with it and I hope that the kids have had fun with it. Unless it's just busy work assignments, which is what I wanted to get away from, it was just like everyone read this, here are your questions and here is the assignment. And I didn't feel like I was teaching them anything or that I was helping them define their own learning. It was just like I was telling them everything and I don't know. (Interview, 4/24).

Just as Margaret had discussed throughout the initiative, the above statement shows the importance she placed on helping students learn to take responsibility for their learning

(“And I didn't feel like I was teaching them anything or that I was helping them define their own learning.”). In addition, it illustrates ways in which Margaret moved away from the “assign and assess” cycle in attempt to individualize her instruction.

Incorporating small group instruction as part of WTW helped Margaret understand how to target instruction based on individual student needs. During her third interview, she shared the benefits of using small group instruction. She said:

I have more time to teach each one of those kids more one on one time. Because I'll pull them back and I can see where there are holes in their language. I can see I know that Jeff has holes in his language and I know that Brian has problem with sounds. And I wouldn't know that before just doing our regular spelling where they're all lumped together. It just allows me more time to work on and get to know them individually as speller and as thinkers. How their minds are working when they're thinking about their spelling or their sounds. I am amazed at how many kids don't know sounds even out of Mr. Barnhouse's class when I pull them back. His class started at level seven in that book. They didn't know short 'a' and long 'a.' They didn't know that if you put an e on the end it made a long sound. I'm like where--there is [*sic*] like four of them in that group. I go, 'Where have you guys been? Where have your teachers been?' So you know hopefully even though they're so low that's what is scary. They are so low but that's where they are and that's where we're going to have to meet them and try to take them from there. And I just think when I can pull them back in the group they can talk together and they're learning

things from the other people. And then I'm learning where they are and I just think that it helps. (Interview, 4/24).

Not only did using small groups help Margaret become more purposeful in her instruction, but so too did practices such as read alouds. Margaret used to incorporate read alouds into her class for enjoyment purposes only or as she stated, “My read aloud was basically just a book that we read after lunch.” (Interview, 4/24). Over the course of the CLC initiative, Margaret discovered how read alouds could be used as part of a mini-lesson to teach a particular strategy or as a model for good writing. She explained how her use of read alouds changed over the course of the year. She said:

I don't think that we did hardly any read alouds first semester. I mean I would read with them the stuff out of the textbook, but as far as incorporating other books. Now I'll do it different next year because at the beginning of the year I'll have science and social studies and math. And so I'll bring some stuff in that has to do with those content areas. But with language I have rarely used read alouds before we start writing or read aloud to help them. I use them to help them think about the different ways and different things that readers do. When I was teaching ICEPAC and just some other things we would use read alouds for that like for dialog or like the scripts or Charlotte's Web. (Interview, 4/24).

During first semester, Margaret read aloud passages from various content area textbooks in order to help her students learn, because the texts were too hard for students to read and comprehend on their own. Now she realized that she could use read alouds to teach strategies that would help students comprehend their subject area texts, rather than do the

work for them. This realization contributed to Margaret's increased PTE beliefs for literacy teaching.

As previously mentioned, a lot came together instructionally for Margaret over the course of the CLC initiative. In addition, the changes she implemented did not happen accidentally; rather, they were the result of goals Margaret set out to achieve. Even though change can be difficult and Margaret did encounter barriers, she framed her experience through a positive lens. Margaret shared her thoughts about the changes she made during CLC cadre. She expressed, "I think that it was so easy for me because I was already wanting to change those things but you don't know how to go about some of them." (Cadre, 4/18).

Despite not knowing how to go about making change, Margaret knew what was at the heart of the changes she desired and was willing to actively engage in the CLC initiative to achieve them. The end result was positive and increased Margaret's PTE beliefs for literacy teaching. As she stated, "It [CLC initiative] absolutely impacted my ability! I am much more confident in how to teach reading. I wish I had this opportunity when I was a 1st year teacher." (*Follow-up Questionnaire*). When asked whether or not Margaret believed she could impact students' literacy learning/achievement, despite any barriers she responded:

As a teacher I can impact students' learning in many ways. I can allow them to read free choice books and select reading material they find interesting. I can model what good readers do and teach them the strategies they need to be successful and get through different kinds of text. I can talk to them about books and authors and allow them time to

share with others what they are reading. I can teach them to question and think while they read. I can meet with them on an individual basis and provide reading strategies, whether it is to speed up and read more fluent [*sic*] or slow down for comprehension. I can share read alouds with my class and create an atmosphere in my classroom which promotes a joy for reading. (*Follow-up Questionnaire*).

Margaret's confidence increased, in part, as a result of learning and using a variety of literacy practices. Central to Margaret's changes was her desire from the beginning to move away from teacher-centered, textbook-driven instruction. During her third interview, Margaret expressed what the year was about for her, including what helped her move away from exclusively using a textbook and making other changes. She stated:

I think this year has just been trying things for me and trying to switch slowly over to some different things and get away from that textbook so much. And you've hit on some key things that have stuck with me and learning is a process and there is no reason to go fast. I mean I can take the time to slow down and really teach what I want to teach. And that the other thing is that it's like a recipe and I'm baking and I don't need, you know, all of the ingredients or just one ingredient from my cabinet. I need to pick and choose what I want to put in for them to learn. So that's why I want to pick and choose my books or writing assignments or our activities that we do. (Interview, 4/24).

Margaret referred to the baking analogy several times over the course of the CLC initiative, repeating it back to me and/or her CLC cadre until she fully believed what she was saying. Once she owned the analogy, Margaret was confident that she, not the textbook, knew best what her students needed and felt capable of providing the literacy instruction necessary for their success.

**Katherine.**

Fresh out of college, newly married, and recently hired to teach high school speech, debate, drama, and English, Katherine drove over 100 miles round trip from Heartland City to Rural High School (RHS) at the time of the present study. Katherine was the household breadwinner, since her husband, a former Division I football player, volunteered as an assistant high school football coach, worked as a substitute social studies teacher, and attended night classes in order to earn his secondary teaching certification through a local college program. She was a learner who was determined to make a difference and succeed. This, in combination with Katherine's passion and commitment to hard work, contributed to her success. Additionally, Katherine's journey was shaped by her experiences as a "newbie," outsider, and former struggling reader.

The first day of school was day one of year one for Katherine. She was hired to teach English, speech, debate, and drama, but only certified in speech, debate, and drama. However, she was open to learning and asking for support. Katherine willingly shared that she did not know a lot about literacy strategies, how to teach English, and that she felt she had a lot to learn. She was assigned to teach "regular" English to sophomores, which meant the course was open to students with a wide range of reading and learning abilities. I came to learn more about RHS' "four-track system" (i.e., regular,

honors/Advanced Placement, vocational-tech, and special education) over the course of the study. This student course-placement-system seemed to apply to teacher assignments, too. For the most part, you either taught all regular or all honors courses, creating a sense of the haves and the have-nots amongst colleagues.

Katherine was assigned a mentor, but as I learned throughout the course of the year a trusting and supportive relationship was never established. I observed and Katherine shared stories that are best described as a jealous and competitive stance taken by her mentor. I felt that this unfortunate dynamic existed in some part because the two women were close in age and although they had some things in common such as they graduated from the same university, the lives they were currently living were sharply different. For example, one was single and the other married. One longed to shout out, “TGIF” and had a reputation among the faculty as a party girl, while the other was interested in “nesting” and struggled to find enough time between a long commute, all of her work responsibilities, and her spouse’s equally as packed schedule. Katherine’s mentor used to walk in Katherine’s same shoes that also required her to work after-school and on weekends as the drama teacher and debate/forensic coach who had to attend tournaments and run play practices. However, rather than lend a supportive hand or ear, Katherine’s mentor provided useless advice to her questions such as, “I’m sure you’ll figure it out” or “I don’t want the students to think I’m still in charge so it’s best you handle it yourself.” Determined to succeed Katherine continued to work hard and learn, despite the limited support she received from her colleagues as a first-year teacher.

As a “newbie,” Katherine told me she felt like an outsider. Despite her outgoing and warm personality, she did not instantly click with a tough group of insiders within



her department. Yet, Katherine did relate and connect quickly with her students. She had a sister the same age and year in school as many of her students and with whom Katherine was in frequent contact via email and text messaging. Additionally, Katherine maintained a close relationship with her parents who she turned to often for support, comfort, and help making it through her first year teaching. Katherine especially identified with her students who struggled with reading and learning. She openly shared with her students and me her personal experiences as a struggling reader and the proud distinction of becoming the first college graduate in her family. Katherine was motivated by her own personal journey to help all of her students realize similar successes through education.

Katherine started the year facing several barriers (i.e., new teacher, not highly qualified in one of her assigned content areas, lack of support from her mentor and other colleagues, and a busy personal and professional life), yet she had the energy, passion, determination, and grit to work through these challenges, stay focused on what was necessary for teacher and student success, and utilized all the resources available as part of the CLC initiative to increase her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching. Katherine aligned herself with me, her literacy coach, and took advantage of opportunities to collaborate with teachers participating in the middle school CLC cadre. Katherine emerged at the end of the school year feeling more confident and stronger as an individual and as a teacher.

During one of the first CLC cadres, Katherine expressed concern about various barriers such as home environment, attitude, and ability that interfered with student and teacher success. However, the combination of Katherine's willingness to learn new

practices and her eagerness to help her students succeed prevented any challenges from getting the best of her efforts. In addition, Katherine related to her struggling readers. She mentioned throughout the year that she remembered being in their same shoes during high school and even college. She frequently commented on why or how she could relate to her students and was always quick to stand up for students and help others see instructional challenges through their perspectives. For example, when a cadre member identified getting students to read required text as challenging, Katherine expressed, “Actually, I can relate with the kids, because if I don't have a good book I won't finish it. I won't.” (Cadre, 9/1). As a result of being able to relate to her students, especially her struggling readers, Katherine was reluctant to place blame on her students’ due to various challenges and allow barriers to become excuses for not helping them succeed.

The following quotes illustrate a range of barriers Katherine believed her students faced as well as speak to how these barriers interfere with their ability to read. For example, Katherine said:

I think the environment is more the barrier...So many things are happening in kids' lives...So I think definitely, the environment of these kids would get in the way of learning more than their actual skills of learning. They all pretty much have the skill; it's the environment that's getting in the way. (Cadre, 9/1).

In addition, she stated:

I have a certain amount of students who are ten minutes behind and need that extra time, knowing that obviously they're not going to take the book home. They're doing it because it's school time, so giving them that extra

interest that if you read that ten minutes at home it is going to be worth the time. Reading is worth the time...But getting them to take that extra step is difficult. (Cadre, 9/1).

Next, Katherine expressed:

I do think kids have a huge misconception about reading, because I know I did and I think that's part of the problem. When I started, even this semester, I was like, 'Okay, we're going to be reading this book.' Everybody just gets so---they put that wall up and they don't want to read. I think part of the problem is that they associate reading with these horrible books that are boring. They don't want to read. They would just as soon watch a movie, and unfortunately that's because of the way society is right now. And some kids can't read, and especially at this level what I see is kids who can't read now are not going to want to try now. So that's part of the problem. (Cadre, 9/1).

Then, she observed:

I found with kids who can't read they find, just like we're finding strategies to help with comprehension, they're finding strategies of ways to get around reading. You think someone understands exactly what they are reading because they have found certain sentences in the book that summarize it in a nutshell--but when you see the whole picture they have no idea, they haven't read a lick of it. (Cadre, 9/8).

During our first interview, Katherine shared with me her thoughts about how adolescents learn to read. It is interesting to note that she connected one's home

environment with his/her interest in reading. It is even more interesting to note that Katherine believed that students who did not grow up around books and reading needed a “spark” and suggested that they will read if teachers are able to show them that they can. In addition, she suggested that helping students realize that they can read is as, if not more powerful, than providing them with interesting books such as Young Adult (YA) literature. Katherine explained:

I think that kids who are around reading from a small child, their parents read to them, I think they have a greater love for reading. And for those kids who have never been around reading and have either been sat in front of the TV or been around drugs their whole life, they have to have some sort of spark. . . I think it starts there in finding what kids like to read.

Then, Katherine went on to note what she believed about high school students/learners. She stated:

We should be at a totally different level at the high school. They can read things on a 10th grade level, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. Not, okay, we’re going to baby them. We’re going to have them read something that they’re interested in because they won’t read anything else.

She felt this was important, because as she expressed:

I think it’s just finding out that they can read. If they can find out that they can read, they’ll do it. That’s human nature. When you know that you can do something, you’ll do it. (Interview, 10/6).

Katherine held strong beliefs about various aspects related to literacy teaching. In fact, at times as she expressed her beliefs I would have to resist the urge to comment and

instead focus on probing Katherine to, “Say more about that” in an effort to help me better understand a different perspective from my own. When I was successful getting Katherine to articulate her thinking, it was exciting to finally make sense of her beliefs and be able to look at an issue through a different lens.

Even though Katherine identified student barriers, it did not mean that she believed they could not learn or that she was helpless as a teacher to do anything about it. In the following excerpt, Katherine shared with me her thoughts on the reading abilities of her Sophomore English class. She stated:

I think I would say 98% of my class reads between seventh grade reading and tenth grade reading. Half of them are probably low tenth grade reading, but I don't have a lot. I wouldn't say that I have any kids below a sixth or seventh grade reading level. They all can pretty much read. It's if they choose to read. And I think most of them could achieve really, really well and have all the potential in the world and could go on in further education, however, these kids have a lot more going on in their lives than just high school stuff. A lot of them hold jobs. Most of them don't have normal home lives. So that's what creates the atmosphere in here as far as me getting homework back and the performance in here. When they are in here, 98% of them perform to their ability and they do the class work and the other 2%, they don't care. They're just waiting until they turn eighteen. The potential in the class is great, but they've never been in the position to think, ‘Oh yeah, I can go to college,’ or ‘Oh yeah, I can go to hairdressing school.’ Everything needs reading and writing. So overall they're pretty

much an average level reading and writing class, however, there are a few, I'd say 5-6% that are below that and I do have some special ed kids in here. (Interview, 10/6).

Katherine believed that her students could achieve, but recognized that their home environment got in the way. She mentioned that some students had never been in the position to believe they could be successful. Getting students to believe and to recognize that they can achieve was a central part of literacy teaching for Katherine. Yet, she would have to learn to deal with ways around the very real student barriers she identified and that challenged Katherine's ability to be successful empowering her students. For example, when I asked her what she believed got in her students' way to success, she replied:

It's drugs [what gets in the way]. It's that their life is consumed by drugs so when they come here they are either on a high or they don't want to do anything because their life is consumed by drugs. Most of them, it has nothing to do with--well they could have started drugs when they were at home, but drugs just form a totally different person. (Interview, 10/6).

I asked Katherine to say more and so she explained the following before realizing she was confusing her class sections. She said:

Well, I would say that when they started drugs their ability stopped there and they're not getting any better. I don't know. That's one of the problems that I have in this class especially is that taking those kids and pushing them. Actually, I'm talking about my other class. I'm sorry, I'm getting them mixed up. The class that was this morning, the problems---

they're not the drug kids--My other English class I can tell you the kids who don't perform are on drugs. That's why they don't perform. In this class, it's outside sources. They have a lot of peer problems, a lot of self-acceptance, and they think that this class---they don't care, because they have so many other major problems in their lives. (Interview, 10/6).

Albeit, as a first year teacher, Katherine faced challenges that made it difficult for her to always feel confident in her abilities to overcome different student challenges that she identified and faced. She identified teacher barriers that interfered with her success such as time and student abilities, interests and attitudes. However, Katherine identified teacher barriers within a larger context of seeking solutions in order to experience teacher and student success. She spoke about what she perceived to be one of her biggest challenges. She said:

I think the biggest obstacle for me, just because this is something new, I know that I'm going to benefit from it [cadre], but I'm still losing class time everyday for me being a first year teacher, I was really skeptical. I'm still really protective over the kids in my class and I want to be able to be there learning with them, because that's pretty much what I'm doing this year, and I hate that, and I hate leaving them with somebody different every week. I don't know. That would probably be the biggest obstacle. I kind of feel like I'm losing out, and of course, the time thing. Everything is new in my life. I did just get married. I do kind of want to spend some time at home, and I live an hour away, you know, all of that fun life stuff

that I've never experienced because I've been in college for the last five years. (Cadre, 9/8).

Then, during other cadres, Katherine identified more specific challenges she believed she faced such as:

I don't think that I have a problem with kids who might need my help, because I relate really well to them. It's the kids who are above that level that I have a hard time with. I know exactly which words to use to talk to the kids who are not getting done with their reading 15 before everyone else. (Cadre, 9/1).

In addition, she spoke about challenges related to comprehension instruction and noted the following about the article read and discussed during CLC cadre:

The article talks about basically that comprehension be taught. Do we allow enough time for this? I mean we have all of these different things we have to do in the curriculum. How long is a good amount of time to spend on something? Because if comprehension is reviewing, revising, and rereading how do you allow enough time for that? (Cadre, 9/15).

She also wondered about the role text plays when it comes to student interest and comprehension of required readings. Katherine stated:

I'm looking more into the future. I'm having to teach Julius Caesar and stuff like that. So I guess maybe I should have rephrased my question. I do think with interesting things it's a lot easier for kids to comprehend. I guess my questions should have been more geared towards things that



won't be so interesting to them. [How do you support comprehension of required reading?] (Cadre, 9/15).

One of Katherine's biggest obstacles proved to be related to her colleagues and not her students or time as she previously stated might be the case. As a "newbie" Katherine felt like an outsider who was not welcomed or supported by her new colleagues. Rather than feel as though she could turn to her colleagues for help, she felt judged by them for not having all the answers to her classroom challenges. This barrier impacted her confidence in a number of ways, including but not limited to her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching.

The following excerpt from my first interview with Katherine, captures the impact of her feelings of isolation and lack of support. It was as if a floodgate opened and Katherine was able to pour out all of the emotions she had bottled up inside. First, I asked her how she felt CLC cadre was going and what she believed to be the problem with our group dynamics. She shared:

No, the problem is that they think because you're [referring to me as the literacy coach and CLC facilitator] not being like, 'Okay, this is what I know,' they think you don't know anything. That's how it is, that's exactly how it is, I know that's exactly what they're thinking, that you don't know anything. That's what they think I do too, and I'm like, 'I'm not going to come in here and tell you my knowledge and tell you do this, do that.' I'm not going to do that, I'm sorry, but I do think I know a little bit. I know that I have a lot of learning to do. I'll have a lot of learning to do when I'm 90. (Interview, 10/6).

Then Katherine went on to explain:

Well they had made comments because I had talked to you and I had maybe showed interest, so that's why I've just kind of been like 'whatever' these last few weeks. I told my mom, 'Well, Kathy's going to come in my room and I'm okay with that because nobody else is coming in,' and my mom, it's just really hard for her, it's killing her, I have gotten four flower arrangements, a plant, everything, because she's really worried because she's like, 'You've never been like this, you've never ever let people get to you like that.' She's like, 'Do not let them do that to you, especially in this type of experience,' because that's what they're doing, they're controlling my success with that because they're trying to, 'Oh, well, she's talking to Kathy, she's just trying to get in.' My mom said, 'That's what they're trying to do, they want to try and cut you off,' and they are. (Interview 10/6).

To make sure that I would be the only one coming to her room, Katherine emphasized:

But honestly, I really don't want anybody to come in my classroom. I really don't, because I don't want them to come into my classroom. And I can tell you this. I will never ever teach in front of them, ever, not one time. I won't. I won't do it. I will not set myself up for heartache. I have done that and I will not. I won't do it. They are so critical because they're hot rods and I'm just a newbie. They would tear me up. They would tear me apart and it would definitely not be to my face. It would be behind my back. (Interview, 10/6)

In an effort to explain her position and to let me know how challenging this “newbie” situation and feeling of mistrust were, Katherine shared:

I’ve never--I’m a very strong-willed person, I mean I bust through anything, and I have never in my whole entire life, and I’ve only been living for 23 years and I’ve only been in this profession for three months, but I have never felt so inferior of anything in all my life. I felt more comfortable when I was student teaching in a meeting saying, ‘This is what I think, this is what we should do.’ ‘Oh yeah, that’s a great idea!’ than what I do and this is my actual job. (Interview, 10/6).

Katherine relied on her husband and other family members for support during her first year. As her emotions poured out, she also shared:

My mom told me, ‘Just remember never to treat anybody like that.’ I was like, ‘Mother, I would never do that.’ It bothered me. I just go home and I cry. Like last night, I get in my car and I’m sitting out there with Pam and Henson and we’re all first year teachers here, and they come out and I had just had--like I’m already scared of parents and the counselor comes out and puts her arm around Pam and Henson and it was just us three in the hall talking, and she says, ‘Pam, Henson, how are conferences going?’ and they’re like, ‘Oh, you know’ and she said, ‘Just remember, I am always in my office if you need anything,’ and I just sat there. I was like, I just could not believe that she totally just x’d me out. I wanted to say, ‘You are a counselor, you are supposed to be a person who counsels people, you are a jerk.’ (Interview, 10/6).

When I attempted to comfort her by suggesting that perhaps the counselor simply forgot her name, Katherine stated both angry and on the verge of tears:

She didn't forget my name because none of those people have ever been in her office and I have had huge problems because I have all the at-risk kids and one tried to commit suicide. I've been in there, she knows my name, and they always have this smirk on their face, almost like they know something. Like you know when your friend knows something about you and they give you that look like, 'Ha, Ha, you're an idiot,' that's what they look at me like. I told my mom it was like, 'I hate it!' (Interview, 10/6).

Despite Katherine's feelings of inferiority, sadness, and lack of support, she expressed determination and commitment to succeed when she said, "I already told my mom, 'They're not making me hate teaching,' because I love kids and I love what I'm doing. (Interview, 10/6).

Both Katherine's love of kids, teaching, and determination contributed to her success. In addition, she also had strong feelings about what was needed for student success. She wanted her students to do more than just read for pleasure. She shared during an interview that she did not believe her role was to teach functional literacy.

Instead, she stated:

I think that across the board they need to learn--they need to learn how to pick up a book and read. They need to be able to do that. I'm not saying that you have to go home every night after school and read a book. That's not what I'm wanting from you. What I'm wanting you to do is know that that is something that could be a possibility that maybe you could enjoy.

If you get a good book that you like it could be something that you could do in your free time, but you have to know how to do it and that's really hard for them to understand. Why do I have to know how to read a book for my leisure time? (Interview, 10/6).

Katherine recognized that certain text can be challenging and knowing how to navigate through it was an important skill that she wanted her students to know and use. She shared a conversation she had with a student about not liking to read and the point that she was trying to make. Katherine said:

Just like a student said today. He said, 'Yeah, you told me you hated reading, but we need to learn how to read and we need to learn how to read all different types of things.' I said, 'You're right. We do.' Because that's what I told them in the very beginning. You're going to come out of here and you're going to be a better reader. That's what I want for them. I said there are some things that I hate reading. That's what he said, 'You said you hate reading some things.' I said, 'You're right. I do hate reading some things, but I read it and I know how to read it.' It's not that I don't know how. That's what I want them to do. I want them to be better readers. If they can read better every single day this year and learn something, we always go through vocabulary or we always go through sentence structures. The book that we did that we just got done reading, it jumps back and forth. It's not an easy read. It's not like, okay, when I was five I did this, six, seven, eight, and now I'm thirty and this is---it jumps back and forth. It was more complex. I think with reading they'll gain the

writing skills of what a complex sentence is. So many of them are ‘I went to the park’ and they don't realize that they could say, ‘I went to the park and . . .’ they have none of that in their vocabulary because they've never seen it. (Interview 10/6).

Katherine went on to make a connection to why reading was important in all content areas. She noted:

And especially with debate because you have to have the background knowledge. So I told them, ‘You have to have the background knowledge.’ They should know their case up and back, they should know the background knowledge, they should know what the safe fact is to fight that, they should know all of that, and so I told them and they were like, ‘Yeah.’ So I said maybe we should take these to a tournament and while you’re debating and you’re going through the article, you take that piece of paper up there with you and say, ‘Okay, this is what I know about it,’ and then the results of what you found at the very end, read that to the other team, because really that’s what they need. (Interview, 10/6).

Katherine expressed beliefs about what contributed to teacher success. Primarily, she identified aspects of instruction and specifics related to her attitude, role, and responsibilities related to literacy teaching. Katherine’s words suggested that she believed it was her job to understand and support students as well as help them believe in themselves, but not necessarily to teach them how to read. She stated that she was willing to make a fool of herself in order to capture students’ attention and make learning fun.

I look at my role in this class as the facilitator. I mean a facilitator as in teaching, whatever, but I'm not there to teach them how to read, because they already should know how to read, but I'm there to make them want to read more and learn how to read bigger and better things, not as in content, 'Oh you're going to read Sports Illustrated this weekend,' and that's better. I'm not talking about content, but I'm talking about gaining a wider range of vocabulary and being able to read things at a higher level, being able to pick up that manual that you're going to have to take for driver's ed or that you're going to have to go and get your hunting license, because those kinds of books and those kinds of terms, if you can't read at a freshman/sophomore level, then you're going to have problems with it. The same with jobs. Most all jobs are skill-based, computer-based tests and they have to be able to learn. (Interview, 10/6).

In addition, to understanding the importance of making real-world connections as part of her instruction and helping students see the relevance of learning to read, Katherine connected to what her struggling learners were experiencing. In the following excerpt, Katherine described herself and her role as a literacy instructor in the following way:

Understandable, because I understand what all of them are going through. I mean that's what we talk about all the time. I have kids come in, 'I'm stupid,' and I understand what they're going through and I understand that some of them really don't think that they're capable of it, and I understand that. For a lot of them, and that's what kills me, is that for a lot of them

it's just really, really hard. They figure they're a sophomore in high school and it's so hard for them that they don't want to try, and not because they don't think that they can. It's because they almost think that they can't do it. And it's not that at all. It's that--I tell them, nothing in life will come easy, and nothing good comes unless you wait. You have to do the work if you want to be successful. It's like with anything. It's like with a job. It's like if you're on a team, in a family, you have to work at it. If you don't work at something, nothing good will come from it. No results will come. So I try to understand, and I work with them all the time.

Without being prompted, Katherine provided an example of how she tried to understand and work with her students. She shared:

I first started out with no late work. I had a huge sign in here, NO LATE WORK, but then I soon realized that a lot of time the kids were not--I had so many Fs--I was like, okay, maybe they're not understanding it. So I sat down with them and I understood, okay, this is where you're not getting it. So let's go back and let's talk about this. (Interview, 10/6).

In addition to revealing ways her attitude, role, and responsibilities contributed to student success, Katherine noted aspects of good instruction that were important. For example, she identified quality book discussions, a balanced focus between practical/real world skills and learning for learning's sake, and teaching that was engaging and addressed a variety of learning styles. However, Katherine identified aspects of good instruction more within the context of searching for what works best and when asking



questions about how to achieve student success. At the beginning of the CLC initiative, she did not have a firm handle on literacy best practices or what good literacy teaching looked like. She was searching for answers and getting her feet wet as a beginning teacher. During one cadre she asked:

My question is how do you do the discussion, the full discussion before and after, because kids are at so many different places in the book. I'm having a really hard time holding discussions after reading simply because you hold those discussions and then you give away the book and it's just like a good movie, you don't want to hear the ending before you've seen it. (Cadre, 9/8).

Then, during another cadre, Katherine wondered what makes a good reader good. She asked:

So I guess my question would be what do we know about competent readers, how do they do it? How are they doing it? Is it something they are born with do they just have this great---I guess is someone born with it or is that something that actually gather over time? (Cadre, 9/15).

During our first interview, Katherine shared that she was trying to figure out what was the best way to support comprehension. She was uncertain whether it was through silent reading, round robin reading, teacher read alouds, partner reading or some combination of one or more of these approaches used in conjunction with writing, discussing, or more. She stated:

Well, I'm trying to figure out, and I haven't figured it out, what ways this--like each of my classes reads better. Is it silent and then reaction papers?

Is it silent and discussion? Or is it group? Or is it me reading to them and then them giving me a reaction? Letting them read to me. I've done some one-on-one, you read me the story and I listen, and we talk about it. Or partner reading, and stuff like that.

At this point, Katherine relied heavily on her gut and personal experience to guide her instructional decision-making. She sensed that fluent reading contributed to comprehension, but was not sure how to support students' efforts beyond encouraging them to practice and figure out which approach works best for them. Katherine said:

It's not that I don't want to read to them, but sometimes I think it's the easy way out, but a lot of kids I've found the reason that they don't like reading is because--I try to--the first time we read it, we read through the first chapter, and I said, 'You've got to give emotion.' Not everybody has the art of being able to sit in front of somebody and read. For me, it's always been really easy. I like reading. I'm a better out loud reader. I like reading aloud than I do to myself. That's just how I've always been. But for them, it's hard because they're like, 'It sounds so much better when you read.' It's like, 'You'll get to that point.' That's what I tell them. If you read and you practice, practice makes perfect. You will get to that point where you will be like, 'Okay, I can read this better than anybody in here.' So I'm trying to find ways that they can learn to read.

She went on to express why she believed finding an approach that works for each individual was important and made a personal connection. She shared:

That's what I'm trying to figure out because I believe that if they learn one way to read, whether it be silent or they like to read aloud, they'll do it. At least that's what happened with me. I figured out that I needed to sit in the hall of my dorm room in the telephone booth where there was no telephone anymore, and sit there and read aloud to myself because that's the way I read best and that's the way I comprehended. And that's what for them they need to realize, what is the best way for them to read and learn how to read and do it well, because most kids, if they don't do it well, they don't do it at all. (Interview, 10/6).

Katherine experienced a turning point after attending a presentation by Dr. Timothy Shanahan. Throughout the CLC initiative a variety of professional development opportunities were made available either by my suggestion or as a result of a specific request from one of the CLC cadre participants. These opportunities went beyond the existing weekly cadre meetings and/or optional after-school study group. They came to be known and referred to fondly as "field trips" because they took us off campus and away from our regular meeting locations. This "field trip" was important for Katherine not only for the new information she gained and the ideas and questions it prompted her to explore, but because it put her in contact with members of the middle school CLC cadre. This introduction proved to be a solution to one of her biggest existing barriers, non-supportive colleagues within her own cadre, by providing caring, collaborative, collegial, thoughtful, helpful and encouraging professionals who were willing to serve as surrogate mentors just one school building away from her own.

During cadre, Katherine was eager to share with her colleagues what she learned after attending a presentation two days earlier with Tim Shanahan. She stated:

He [Shanahan] made a point of what I think everyone is guilty of--Here's a book and now read it and write a response journal. People say they have read it but that is not really teaching reading it is an assignment and it really made sense to me. (Cadre, 10/20)

This was not the only point Shanahan made that made sense to Katherine. She eagerly shared several other “Ah ha” moments. She stated, “He [Shanahan] talks about better teaching---that it is the quality and intensity of instruction that matters.” (Cadre, 10/20). Katherine went on to explain:

It's not so much going in and showing the math teachers a strategy to teach them how to read the math; it is actually sitting down and teaching the kids how to read algebraic equations, geometry theories---actually having the kids read not sitting up there reading to them. He talked about doing the same with science---teaching kids to read the experiment not reading it to them (Cadre, 10/20).

Then, Katherine shared another point made by Shanahan and connected it to her own classroom. She noted:

He [Shanahan] said the more they can read aloud fast and efficiently they will be able to comprehend better because they feel more confident.

Totally makes sense to me because I have kids that read really fast or are unsure of what they are reading and then they can't summarize in their own words. He said pairing kids up and have one read and then the other

react and if it doesn't make sense to them then they read it again. That really makes sense to me about fluency. (Cadre, 10/20)

Attending this presentation was important to Katherine for several reasons. First, Shanahan touched on several issues that Katherine was wrestling with in her own classroom that sparked possible solutions for her to consider. Second, Katherine was able to spend the day with a group of teachers who were open to learning more as well as receptive and supportive of Katherine and the questions, ideas, and thoughts she shared during the group's time to debrief following the presentation. This was a different experience and environment than Katherine was used to from her weekly cadre.

By the middle of the CLC initiative, Katherine expressed frustration with student barriers. Primarily, Katherine identified skills and attitudes as the biggest student barriers she faced. She recognized that some students were struggling with assignments and she initially was at a loss as to why and what to do. However, during her second interview, Katherine shared her thoughts about what she believed created challenges for some of her struggling students as well as ideas for what she believed she could do to help eliminate them.

First, Katherine was frustrated and did not offer any explanation as to why she believed students struggled. Katherine believed they understood a particular assignment and was confused, because she felt as though she clearly explained what students needed to include in each paragraph of a business or job inquiry letter. She noted, "No, they understand what they are supposed to have on the paper but they don't have it." (Interview, 1/30). She noticed that students put the required information in the wrong

place or did not include it at all in their drafts. Katherine recounted how she explained what she expected in the letters. She said:

You know, like in a letter, I mean, I pretty much broke it down. I said, you know, obviously when you get older you can decide maybe you will only have, you know, a situation paragraph where you tell them the situation. The situation for an inquiry is okay, the situation is I found your ad in the paper or on the internet you know by a friend or whatever that you have an opening and that I'm interested in. And then the second paragraph is explaining you know why you would be qualified for the position or why you want the position or basically it's explaining why you're writing them. And then the last paragraph is the action what do you want? Well they just don't get it, I mean like they won't like for instance one of the kids the last paragraph I mean it was just like explaining you know who he is. You know which should have been some of the second paragraph but some of it actually shouldn't have even been on there. I said, well what do you want, what's this paragraph? Well it's what I want. I said, well what do you want to tell them that you have a wife and three kids? No. So what do you want? It's like they don't know, they know it's supposed to be there but they don't put it down. (Interview, 1/30).

Katherine was concerned because she believed students “know it's supposed to be there” but as she noted, “they don't put it down.”

When asked what she believed was getting in the way of students' success, Katherine shared that both low skills such as challenges with spelling and other factors

such as getting distracted by automated computer prompts or ADHD created barriers. During her second interview, Katherine described how the combination of these factors interfered with one student's ability to get past the "little red marks" on the computer that indicated misspellings and express ideas and focus on content. These challenges caused Katherine to question her instruction. She wondered:

Sometimes I feel like I'm doing him an injustice you know giving him all these higher-level thinking questions, because I feel like he should be back at square one. I mean he can't even write a complete sentence. He can't even spell beautiful! He is a sophomore in high school. So I just think that sometimes maybe I should [long pause] so I don't know. (Interview, 1/30).

Not yet certain of how to overcome student barriers, Katherine showed signs of frustration as she thought out loud. Her frustration was exacerbated by the belief that her colleagues did not fully understand the range of diverse learners and extent of student needs that Katherine faced within her classes. Shortly after pausing and stating that she was unsure of what to do, Katherine said:

I feel like in our cadre that, you know, it's like, well, everybody should be performing at the same level, you know, like, well, I do this, you know. What do you mean you don't expect them to read books, you know? Everybody is supposed to read books and you don't expect it from them so they don't do it. But it's like realistically, you know, some of these kids, you know [brief pause before switching topics]. . . (Interview, 1/30).

Then, when asked to explore ideas for helping her students who were struggling, Katherine identified what she thought might work, but noted that she already unsuccessfully tried it. Katherine thought inviting students to work with her in small groups was a possible solution until she noticed, “they won’t come over there. They won’t decide for themselves it’s something that they don’t understand.” (Interview, 1/30). When I probed for her thoughts about other approaches that might work, she quickly switched gears from a problem-solving mode and explained why her proposed solution did not work, which had to do with another student barrier, their attitudes. Katherine shared with me that providing one-on-one or small group help to students “just depends [on] what kind of attitude they have for that day.” (Interview, 1/30). She noted that some students are open to her help, but others are not because they are accustomed to not caring and have been allowed to not care. Katherine described their attitudes as, “I don’t care. I just don’t want to do it, you know. I’ll just leave it like this and it’s just not a big deal.” (Interview, 1/30).

Katherine continued to discuss examples of how low skill levels get in the way of student learning. This eventually led her to question the existing curriculum in light of students’ low skills; especially modifications she was making to accommodate students classified as special needs. First she stated:

But in some ways where along the line is the justice making them [students receiving modifications] realize that this isn’t how you write. You have to write a paragraph. I mean when, okay, so in sophomore English I’m going to worry about complete sentences and spelling? What when they’re senior’s they’re going to learn how to write paragraphs?



And they just have, I just have no structure of what is supposed to happen.  
(Interview, 1/30).

Then, after Katherine expressed concern about modifications, she started thinking out loud about the value of the existing curriculum and wondering if making changes would be more beneficial to all of her students. She stated:

I wonder maybe if I go into technical reading and writing and just not even worry about Shakespeare. Go into non-fiction reading and writing. Don't worry about, I mean we're at the basics here. I'm wondering will Shakespeare even really help when they don't know how to spell? They don't even know how to write a paragraph. And even my higher achieving kids they wrote a paper and I was just like they wouldn't make it a day in college. (Interview, 1/30).

As this quote demonstrates, Katherine believed low-writing-skill levels were not limited to her students with special needs. This barrier included high-achieving students too.

In addition to student barriers, Katherine mentioned or inferred that teacher barriers also that got in the way of her success. Teacher barriers that were identified included lack of a clearly defined curriculum, unsupportive colleagues, school scheduling practices, and several issues related to instruction such as her current grouping structures, grading practices, and failed attempts to implement certain instructional approaches.

Katherine recognized that there was “no rhyme or reason” to what was taught or when it was taught. She recognized that student learning is not transferring across grade-levels and tasks. Katherine believed that a lack of a clearly defined curriculum, including a scope, sequence, and pacing guides, interfered with student learning and created a

barrier to her instruction. As previously stated, Katherine believed she had “no structure of what is supposed to happen.” (Interview, 1/30). As previously mentioned, this caused her to question when, where, and how to begin to address gaps in student skills.

Frustrated by this barrier, she stated:

They should have what I thought last year they would have had [omit].  
And I’m not saying that, you know, last year’s freshman teacher didn’t teach it. I just think that there is no rhyme or reason to do anything . . .  
But I just think that I can honestly say when I as far as like writing, for instance, when I had it out, the writing assignment I got back, there was not one person with the exception of one person that would have maybe even remotely even said that they knew how to write. I mean not one person was the paper was the paper organized in any way that would ever be acceptable at a college level. I mean not one person . . . Most of them should be writing at sophomore level but none of them [are]. I mean that’s like okay where did they learn to write? Oh they didn’t. You know they tell me, ‘Oh I don’t remember learning what an introduction is?’  
(Interview, 1/30).

Not only did Katherine believe that lack of a clearly defined curriculum created barriers to student learning and for her instruction, she suggested that unsupportive colleagues and/or a school culture that did not provide a safe environment for new and beginning teachers to express instructional challenges without fear of being negatively judged also presented a barrier. During her second interview, Katherine revealed her

feelings about being judged and a sense of a lack of support around student-specific issues she was facing and the real instructional questions she was pondering. She stated:

I think that is part of our problems here is . . . that's like sometimes how I'll feel like in our cadre that you know it's like well everybody should be performing at the same level you know like well I do this you know.

What do you mean you don't expect them to read books you know?

Everybody is supposed to read books and you don't expect it from them they don't do it. But it's like realistically you know some of these kids you know, I feel like he does the work and he gets, he is a C student, but when I actually look at him like I don't, if I were to compare his work to you know somebody who is actually doing what, I mean really he shouldn't be in this English. (Interview, 1/30).

Katherine starts and stops throughout this excerpt with several thoughts, concerns, and questions she most wants to think through with a supportive colleague without fear of being judged. However, revealing how she felt when she did express what was really happening in her classroom with her CLC cadre indicates that she perceives their lack of support as a barrier.

In addition to unsupportive colleagues, Katherine believed that the school's existing scheduling practices created a teacher barrier. For one, she believed that the most experienced teachers were assigned class schedules that predominately included high achieving students who were college-bound and that the least experienced teachers received class schedules that included a large percent of students with diverse challenges and a wide range of instructional needs. She suggested that scheduling was a teacher

barrier together with a culture that permitted teachers to act as gatekeepers who determined whether or not students enrolled in general education or advanced-level course. Katherine addressed this barrier when noting the differences between her students and a colleague's students in the following excerpt:

And what you're teaching and how things are, it's just one way, because they really have never had a kid not do an assignment, because they're going to college, they're teaching juniors and seniors and one is teaching sophomores, but by sophomore year, you know if they're going to go to college and those are the kids that are in there, as opposed to these [students] . . . and I've asked the kids, 'How do you select college prep English?' and they said that it's if the teacher will . . . if they want to go . . . some of them will go to college in my class, but if they were not up to par, the teacher didn't want them in there. (Interview, 10/6)

Other teacher barriers that Katherine identified fell under a larger category of instructional issues. These issues included her current grouping structures, grading practices, and her failed attempts to implement instructional approaches. For example, when discussing plans for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and sharing her desire to introduce a workshop approach in her classroom, Katherine noted her reservations around incorporating independent reading time. She stated:

I tried that [independent reading time] at the beginning but they said, 'Screw you,' and so I am not . . . it is way different then college prep because these kids . . . these kids hate to read, 'Like F you.' I want them to read and they are and they just won't do it and it is setting them up for

failure. Some of them I do have read a little more often than most. (Cadre, 12/15)

Katherine viewed her initial failed attempt at incorporating independent reading into her class as a barrier. This excerpt also reveals a connection between Katherine's lack of success with this instructional approach and her lack of confidence in knowing what to do with a class full of reluctant readers, or who she refers to as "these kids" and believes would be set up for failure should she re-introduce independent reading and expect them to participate in silent sustained reading time.

Despite student barriers such as low skills or negative and resistant attitudes, Katherine identified what was needed for student success. She continued to focus on building and maintaining positive and supportive relationships with her students, including some of the most challenging and reluctant learners. Strong relationships with her students and seeing her role as the person responsible for student learning allowed Katherine to focus on what was needed to foster success. She recognized what was of interest to her students and understood the need for course work and learning to be relevant to her students' lives. For example, she stated:

Well, not with Adam, because he likes me and understands that I'm there to help him. And I think that's how Leo is too . . . And like what I have noticed like with this technical writing and stuff they are interested in it and I do really feel like they need to know, you know, if they get anything out of it, it should be when you do something like this technical writing it needs to be professional . . . I mean whether you're writing a letter to the editor or you're writing a letter to a job or professional letter about how

you were displeased with a service that you received at McDonald's or at Wal-Mart, it has to be professional or they won't take you seriously.

(Interview, 1/30)

Additionally, Katherine believed that all students needed exposure to text in order to increase their spelling, writing, and reading abilities and that some of her most struggling students needed access to a reading class or special interventions in order to adequately address gaps in their skills and abilities. She noted:

They need extra help with English. They need an extra whatever that class might be a reading and writing class. I mean I truly believe that if some of these kids were reading and actually saw the text they'd be able to write it. I mean whether that is a reading class or whether that is an extra -- I mean I know my old school . . . If they actually read they would see how things are supposed to be. They would start recognizing, 'Oh, that's how you spell that.' I mean the more and more you see a word the more and more you're going to know, 'Oh, that's how you spell it.' I mean I remember when I couldn't spell Topeka when I was a kid and the more and more I looked at a map the more and more I read about the capital of Kansas -- 'Oh, that's how you spell Topeka!' They're not familiar with anything because they're not around it. (Interview, 1/30)

In addition to believing that students needed help via an extra class or intervention, Katherine felt strongly about communicating her personal experience with reading and helping students understand the importance of learning how to read, regardless of whether or not it was something they enjoyed doing. She believed that hard

work and dedicating time to improving reading skills mattered most, not whether or not she promoted reading for pleasure or exuded personal excitement for reading. The following excerpt captured her passion behind this belief and addressed several of the already mentioned components of what Katherine believed contributed to student success. She shared the following in response to an interview question about how to remedy what students cannot do and how to address their low skills:

I explained to them, you know, it's not that I'm not excited about teaching, because people say, 'Well, if your not excited about reading then they're not going to be.' And yes that's true in some ways but I also think that there's reality to it. They don't care if I'm excited about reading in my own personal life, they don't care what I do on the weekends, they don't care if I like the color purple or not, they don't care if I'm excited about it. I have to get through to them why reading is important. They don't care. I could come in excited every single day and they'd say, 'Screw you. You like to read, I don't big deal.' (Interview, 1/30)

Katherine continued and made her point that knowing how to read, not whether or not you or your teacher likes to read, is what matters. She said:

So I can, I really relate to them but what I also tell them is the difference between me and you is that I can read something and I can understand it. Why? Because I've actually sat down and made the time to learn how to read, it's just something that I don't do in my free time. So what I'm telling you is in here whether it be English or whether it be in social studies whether you're a construction worker or you work at McDonald's,

whether you're a doctor or a lawyer you have to know how to read. You have to know how to read different types of text, you have to be able to comprehend it and when people ask you, that's how you gain knowledge. You gain knowledge by reading stuff and then spitting it out. So I'm not telling you, you have to like to read in here, but you have to read.

(Interview, 1/30)

By the middle of the year, Katherine was still working to uncover what led to teacher success. She identified a range of components that she believed worked for her and promoted successful literacy teaching. For example, Katherine suggested that experience and ongoing training as well as several aspects related to instruction, including her role within the classroom as a co-learner and the role of modeling, engagement, and other specific literacy practices such as those related to the amount of time allotted for reading and different ways to build background knowledge or establish a purpose for reading contributed to her success with literacy teaching.

For example, during her CLC cadre, Katherine acknowledged that she was still “learning” and working to figure out what works for her students. Katherine compared herself to a more experienced colleague, suggesting that unlike Elizabeth, Katherine was not highly qualified in the area of English. She stated:

I just think, for instance, Elizabeth is a way better English teacher compared to me. I don't have the education. I am learning --Sometimes I am thinking, ‘What can I do to help this kid?’ I find myself in a computer or in a book trying to challenge the kids -- I feel like I do a good job with



some students. There are some kids in my class that are learning a lot and benefiting a lot from me -- I don't know. (Cadre, 12/1)

Although Katherine admitted she was still learning, demonstrated she was resourceful by looking to the internet and professional books for guidance, expressed that she believed that some students were “learning a lot and benefiting a lot” from her, she still lacked confidence at this time to reach all students. Katherine questioned her training and credentials to adequately do the job when she stated, “I don’t have the education” as well as whether her existing knowledge, current practices, or available resources were enough to reach all students when she expressed, “I don’t know” after sharing what she was thinking and doing.

Not only did Katherine believe that training and experience contributed to teacher success, she identified several areas related to instruction that worked for her at this time. First, while discussing a section of *Mosaic of Thought* (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997) during CLC cadre, Katherine showed a level of confidence when she shared why she believed it was okay not to know everything when teaching. She demonstrated that her role as a teacher is not always to be the expert in order to support student learning. In fact, she learned by not embracing this belief that students sometimes actually do know more than the teacher. She shared:

On page 52 she [the author] talks about how she started talking about the Indians and this kid pipes up and says, ‘Actually, I know dah, dah, dah.’ I remember just telling myself that I was not going to act like I know something if they ask me something and I don't know. That happened to me. I was like we are going to do this, that and the other. We were

talking about lighting or something. Well, I didn't know that this kid had done lights for four years and he told me this is how you do it. (Cadre, 12/1)

In addition to embracing a role as a co-learner within her classroom, Katherine expressed that modeling worked for her after some initial reservations. After watching me model using think alouds as a part of comprehension strategy instruction such as thinking aloud to ask questions and make predictions while reading text, Katherine shared how she might use modeling in her class. She stated:

I think I am going to use it with the text . . . I am reading aloud *Killing Mr. Griffin* to them and we recently just started it and I am going to do some of this. I think I am going to chart -- put charts up and start there and as we move through the book have them go through. I don't know that I am going to model it so much but tell them that we are going to work with some comprehension strategies and become better readers -- I will model it, I guess, not model it for a whole chapter but maybe choose a sample or do something different to show what I am talking about and then I am going to chart them up -- I think I will try that. (Cadre, 12/1)

Then, one month later, Katherine had an “Ah ha” moment and was convinced of the power of modeling. First, she shared during CLC cadre after watching me model a lesson:

I learned something. Sometimes I think that I forget to model. I would have never pointed that out had I not like, I never get to see that part from

when kids don't understand. I mean I go back but maybe I don't go back far enough. (Cadre, 1/5)

One week later, Katherine put modeling into practice in her own classroom and continued to recognize its importance when discussing during CLC cadre the impact of using "hook" to build background knowledge or establish purpose for learning. She made a connection between the two and stated the following:

But the step that I always missed that I didn't really consciously know is the modeling. Because I think so many times, you know, you get that hook. Everybody does that fun activity or type they love – ‘Okay, this is what we're going to do,’ and every kid is excited and then, ‘Okay, here let's do it.’ And I kind of misunderstood myself for that -- that was me modeling, but it wasn't. It was me getting their attention. You actually have to sit up and model, ‘Okay, this is how I want you to write the letter,’ you know. I actually write a letter for them. (Cadre, 1/12)

Two weeks later when reflecting on what was working, Katherine mentioned the power of modeling again and shared:

They are really getting used to me modeling. I notice that me modeling everything we do that they think it is so cool. I brought in a resume and showed them. By me showing them what we are doing they really like that. (Cadre, 1/26)

In addition, Katherine started to identify and discuss other practices and strategies that she found useful, rather than express a sense of confusion, lack of control, or understanding of what instructional practices she might use and for what specific

purposes. This increase in knowledge possibly contributed to an increase in confidence and her personal efficacy for literacy teaching. While debriefing after watching me conduct a model lesson, Katherine stated:

In a nutshell, I guess for me my big take away is really engagement.

Engagement is a big take away. Thinking through each of those steps as a way to get students more actively engaged. (Cadre, 1/5)

Katherine was thinking about her teaching success through the lens of what was successful for students. For example, she noted using “read aloud or the admit slip or whatever has been really successful when I’ve actually been doing it in my theater classes.” (Cadre, 1/12). Katherine went on to explain how it was successful by stating, “Well, I noticed that they’re more apt to be like, ‘Okay, now what do we have to do,’ and now they’re more interested in what we’re doing.” (Cadre, 1/12).

Not only was Katherine beginning to incorporate several new literacy practices into her classes and recognize the power of explicitly teaching comprehension strategies, she started to identify practices that she might be able to use to help some of her most struggling learners. After viewing a video clip of Cris Tovani modeling a strategy lesson, Katherine reacted:

I just thought that it was amazing for a special-ed kid -- you never realize that there is a way to get around them -- she said she had tried so many different things with her struggling readers and so she writes for them, instead of like them writing it she just goes over and bumps them and then she writes it down for them. And it was something that I never would have thought about, but a lot of people would say that she was doing their

work for them, but it really was them doing the work, because they don't want to write it down and forget what they're saying or make a jerk of themselves so she wrote it down for them. (Cadre, 2/16).

Katherine readily identified with how her struggling students felt. She recognized the power of transcribing the thoughts of a student with special needs and realized that this practice prevented students from forgetting their thoughts or not sharing them for fear they might “make a jerk of themselves.”

Throughout the CLC initiative, Katherine advocated for her students' success. Approaching the end of the CLC initiative, she still identified student barriers such as school scheduling practices and students' home environments. However, she spoke about them through a frame of what she could do to help them overcome them.

For example, Katherine recognized that the school's scheduling practices contributed to students' misconceptions about the level of rigor within general education classes, potentially interfered with students reaching their full potential, and caused them to believe low expectations existed in general education versus college prep sections and that only lower-achieving students were placed in general education sections. This bothered Katherine. She spoke to this issue in the following statement:

I think that's one of the main problems with how the English department is kind of categorized, college prep, and regular. Is that these kids look at each other as, 'Okay, these kids are just like me because we're regular ed English kids,' you know. 'We're not going to college so I'm going to be able to talk.' However, that's the misconception. There are kids in here who are going to college and there are kids in here that don't care about

Cum Sum Laude [*sic*]---whatever. And they're just wanting -- they're in here because nobody knows if they're college prep. They say that we do more in here than in the college prep. They took college prep freshmen English and it was a breeze and they decided that they didn't want to take it from the other teachers so they decided to go to just regular-ed. So that's the problem is that it's a misconception, 'Well everybody is like me in here.' Well, really, no, there are so many different levels even in regular-ed and they decided to go regular-ed. (Interview, 4/20)

Whether it was having access to college-prep classes, understanding that education can change one's life, or that college was an option for everyone, despite their existing home environment, Katherine wanted to help her students find a way around existing barriers. In the following excerpt, she expressed her desire to spark her students' interest in learning, in the same way that her family inspired her to get a college degree, even though her parents never did. She shared:

For some of them -- and I think that is the big, like for me, like Maya and I are a lot the same, because my Dad is not an educated person. But what I saw was that my Dad worked really, really hard and became successful. And what he always told me is to be successful is to go to high school. However, college was always a dream of like my family. And hers is the same way. Her Dad is successful and they do have nice things so education is a possibility. Some of these kids who their parents are on drugs or they've been divorced six times and can not barely make it, if they actually see that because their parents aren't successful --they see,

‘Oh well, they’re doing alright to get by,’ so that’s good enough for them.

I mean, where can I spark the interest for them to be like, ‘Hey, I want to do good in English.’ (Interview, 4/20)

Despite recognizing that barrier existed, Katherine continued throughout the initiative to put herself in her students’ shoes and believed, based on her own personal experiences, that with hard work they could learn and be successful in school and life. She embraced her role as a teacher and felt it was her responsibility to make it happen, regardless of what barriers stood in their way.

Just as Katherine identified student barriers throughout the initiative, she also spoke about teacher barriers. For example, she continued to address lack of a supportive climate within her school and with her colleagues for learning and trying literacy strategies. In addition, she was concerned with and lacked confidence with how to help reluctant readers, noting that “The main problem that I have is the readers that need it [referring to strategy instruction] the most are so [omit] resistant . . . [and] they won’t do the work, they won’t do it.” (Interview, 4/20). Furthermore, Katherine noted that lack of resources and lack of training both contributed to the type of literacy practices she wanted to put in place or know more about. For example, she acknowledged that she was not confident teaching or grading writing stating, “I’ve never been trained on how to correct an English paper and that is my biggest weak spot is that I give them more credit than they deserve.” (Interview, 4/20). Katherine owned responsibility for this barrier and believed that as a result, “I feel like as far as writing goes they have not bettered themselves in here at all.” (Interview, 4/20). However, none of the barriers Katherine

identified got in her way to the point that she did not or could not continue to find a way past them.

Katherine identified several barriers she faced throughout the year in response to a question on the *Follow-up Questionnaire* that inquired about struggles she faced and how she overcame them. She wrote:

I felt like I was the only one trying to conquer the world. Because I was trying the things in the literacy cadre I was an outsider and everyone left me out and did not include me into their supplies or ideas. I am always willing to try something new but it seemed as though they were the expert! I always wanted to say congratulations you are a better teacher than me [*sic*]. You have been teaching for 15 to 30 years. THIS IS MY FIRST YEAR! I really overcame this by meeting and going to lunch, workshops whenever I could with the middle school cadre to survive. [My husband] just gave me a countdown to each break and I counted the days every day.

*(Follow-up Questionnaire)*

During her final interview, Katherine mentioned lack of resources. She stated:

And I've been looking at different things and how to tackle the Shakespeare bit. And I just decided that I was going to just eventually, I went and tried to get some text sets for Julius Caesar. And they said wait this summer we would order them but that didn't help me for this year and some of them the school already has . . . (Interview, 4/20).



Katherine continued to explain her plans for how she wanted to use the text sets to teach Julius Caesar in a similar way that she had done when teaching a unit on non-fiction text before noting:

Just the resources that I had and wouldn't allow me to do that. So we're going to take a little bit different approach. I would like to do more short reads. (Interview, 4/20)

However, as the following excerpt illustrates, even though she identified this as a barrier it did not prevent her from moving forward. A problem-solver approach kept her focused on finding solutions, rather than assigning blame. Actually, identifying what Katherine wanted to try and what resources she needed resulted in me providing Katherine with a text set created from my personal collection of Shakespeare resources to use for the unit.

For Katherine, throughout the initiative it was not about teacher or student barriers. It was about student success. Katherine recognized the positive impact strategy instruction had on her students and she continued to articulate what she believed was necessary in order for students to be successful. She enthusiastically shared two examples of the positive impact strategy instruction had on her students during her CLC cadre in March. First, she shared one student's experience and stated:

I have a good teaching moment. I have two students who, well I have one student has never read a full book in his life, and they read a book and they gave an oral or they came up to me and did a book talk and he was so excited about the book and it was *Rifle* by Gary Paulson. He was like I read it in two days Mrs. Barnthouse and he is a very, very struggling reader and we went over asking questions like more than just surface level

questions and I looked at his reading log and his questions and it was unbelievable the questions that he was asking. He was like it really helped me understand it and he was like it's all making sense. (Cadre, 3/9)

Then, she spoke of another student's success. She shared the following:

I have another student and she came in and she said, 'I just need to let you know that I've never been, I've always read, you know I do my homework, but I never really realized what I was missing out on reading until I started reading and actually reading and making text connections and now I really focus and I get into it and I understand it.' And she is like, 'I just always thought that when I read something it was meant to be read as you read it for the assignment because you have to, not because you want to.' And she is like, 'When I'm making connections I really feel like I'm in the book.' (Cadre, 3/9)

In addition to celebrating student successes, Katherine spoke about what she believed contributed to them. For example, she commented after viewing a video by Kelly Gallagher that she liked "how he said everyone of you are good readers in here and everyone of you are poor readers, depending on what the text is." (Cadre, 3/30). She connected what Gallagher said to what was needed to help her struggling readers be successful. She added:

Because that is really what I have to drive home with my struggling readers because they don't understand why they don't get the books that maybe three of the four people at their table are reading. And some of them just have different interests, you know. (Cadre, 3/30).

Katherine recognized that student interests contributed to success with text, but also embraced the phrase, “confusion is necessary,” that she learned from a video clip of Cris Tovani teaching a strategy lesson. Katherine noted that celebrating this phrase “really helped” her students and made her realize “That it’s so important to read it [difficult text] over and over and over again” in order for students to be successful. (Interview, 4/20).

Katherine believed that success with reading was key to her students’ overall success in school and in life. She believed she needed to “Spark interest. To show them that it’s relevant.” (Interview, 4/20). Katherine consistently attempted to do this and turned this belief into a mantra that she shared with her students over and over again. She said:

I mean I tell them every, that’s why I say they probably tune me out, because I’m like, ‘How are you going to be successful? Reading!’ They always tell me that. But I tell them that I have it in my journal. I keep a little log on my computer and every week I always ask them, ‘How can we be successful?’ you know, ‘What can make you fulfill your dreams?’ And it’s like rehearsed, ‘Reading can make you be successful. Reading can fulfill so much.’ And I tell them all the time and, ‘Let’s just say that you didn’t have school. How would people learn to read? To read about things. How do you learn things? How do you learn about the news? [omit] You read those things.’ (Interview, 4/20)

Since the beginning of the initiative, Katherine believed in the power of education and the importance of learning to read successfully. She knew this as a result of her own personal experiences and she was passionate about helping her students see the

connection between reading and success. However, by the end of the initiative, Katherine also gained specific literacy teaching practices that helped her with her mission to support student success.

Katherine was energized by student successes, which appeared to contribute to her teacher successes, and increased her personal efficacy for literacy teaching. She believed she made the right decision to incorporate strategy instruction and reflected on her decision to give it a try when she shared:

Mary Kate told me, ‘Well, you’ve gotta start somehow. I just think you should jump right in.’ And I’m like, ‘Well, I don’t know.’ So I took two or three weeks to kind of get it together and it [watching the video] just clarified that I did make the right decision...I’m taking it bit by bit and I’m starting my kids with making connections and asking questions...and I do think the models does work. (Cadre, 3/2)

By the end of the initiative, Katherine was learning and trying many new literacy practices and structures and she continued to point to her students’ success as an indicator that her teaching was successful. During her CLC cadre, Katherine shared some of the new structures and practices she was trying and was noticeably delighted about the positive impact they were having on her students. She commented:

Well remember that book that you gave us on how to read non-fiction the white book from Scholastic? Well I found a really cool chart in there and we’re putting all of what good readers do in a folder and I have a sample folder and I’m doing it with them and we went over like how we can identify some of the text features and especially what are important in

non-fiction. . . we are still doing the non-fiction and they are really liking it a lot and they're learning so much. We've gone over how good readers make connections and we've talked about making connections and for the first time I really feel like I mean some of them are making connections, you know, like, 'Wow, that's awesome!' They are really getting into the reading only I know now, I mean, you can really tell when kids are reading and they are making different types of connections. You can assign something and they can read it and do the work but they never really connect it with. They're really learning how to connect. (Cadre, 3/2)

Katherine continued sharing and emphasized how her literacy teaching was benefiting her students. She noted, "They are more excited about reading their own books because they're like, 'Oh yeah, I get it,' and they're writing stuff down." (Cadre, 3/2). In addition, she was positively anticipating how much more they would learn the longer she implemented her new practices. To this effect, Katherine said:

I'm just really anxious to see, what I mean, like they have just even gotten better in just the things that I've given them and just with their work and they are actually writing stuff down. I'm so anxious to see like at the end of the year by doing this every single time with non-fiction and with Shakespeare how good they are going to be. (Cadre, 3/2)

The longer Katherine participated in the CLC initiative, the more often she articulated connections between what she learned from professional text to what she was trying in her classroom. For example, she shared:

I like personal interviews [mentioned in professional video by Cris Tovani]. Last week I started them with two minutes, 'Hey, how's it going?' You know, 'What's going on?' and they bring in their reading logs and what they're reading and we talk a little bit about their book and if they have any questions about anything. And I have noticed just in one day that I did it with my A1 class that they really like that time with me, 'Hey, I'm not understanding this.' (Cadre, 3/9)

In another example about a professional article shared during CLC cadre, Katherine noted:

And questioning, there are so many different levels of questions and just like the article, 'Did You Ask a Good Question Today?' I read part of that to my class because I really think like when she is talking about questions and, 'Put it in a question format,' that they get so accustomed to me sitting up there and being like, 'Well, what was Chapter One about? Let's talk about it.' What's wrong with them asking me questions and then asking a ton of questions? Like in life it seems like everything is asking questions. (Cadre, 3/9)

She continued to share her thoughts about the importance of incorporating questioning as part of her instructional practices, connected this to what Cris Tovani stated about using discussions as an opportunity to construct meaning, and shared what happened during a recent lesson. She commented:

Yesterday when we read an article the discussion was intense, but when we got done I thought, 'Wow, they really got into it. They really had a lot

of views, and that's what it's all about.' It's like getting those thinking caps on, having them reading something, and having them think about it even though it might not be the same opinion of everybody else. (Cadre, 3/9)

Katherine expressed her beliefs about the importance of teaching strategy instruction through the following analogy. She stated:

I think that strategy instruction is important to teach kids, because I believe it's kind of like problem solving, kind of with a strategy they can use to help them figure out something. It's just like if they have an equation for something that will help them to figure something out. It's going to be a lot easier than if they're just given a math problem and no equation and not know how to figure it out. If you give kids tools to figure things out they are going to be more apt to try it and more apt to do it and obviously learn a lot more. (Interview, 4/20)

By the end of the initiative, Katherine learned and used a range of literacy practices, including ways to teach students how to read different types of text, how to do a close read of difficult text, and more. However, during her final interview, Katherine shared what she told her dad something that she learned this year that she felt was most important to her success. She stated:

But I told him is what I learned is even greater and why I am a teacher is not because I have a love for speech, it's because I have a love for kids. And the reason, there is a greater reason that I'm here, and that would be to teach reading. And he goes, 'Well, what the hell are you waiting on?

Go get your degree in reading and then come back and teach it.’

(Interview, 4/20)

Katherine embraced her role as a learner throughout the initiative. She did love kids and she felt it was her responsibility to take ownership for her students’ learning. Each of these things contributed to her success and her desire to keep learning so that she could have an even greater impact on her students’ success through literacy teaching.

**Mary Kate.**

I distinctly remember the first time I met Mary Kate. It was the initial meeting I had with the middle school group to go over the study purpose, goals, and to invite all interested to participate. She made a strong first impression, but I pegged her all wrong! She entered the room with a friend and colleague, another veteran teacher, proceeded to sit down, listened to me with arms crossed and a skeptical look on her face, and then when the opportunity for questions arose she fired a line of pointed questions my way such as “How would this be any different from the countless string of professional development initiatives I’ve sat through during my career?” “Why would I choose to take time away from my students every week?” The questions went on and then she stared me down as I attempted to convince her that this would be different and worthwhile just short of begging her to give me a chance. Her questions were not intended to intimidate, rather she wanted clear answers in order to make an informed decision before making such a big commitment. However, at the time it was hard to realize through my nervousness. I could tell she was a “power player” someone who was considered a leader and held sway over the other teachers, and principal, whom she later jokingly informed me has lived fewer years than she taught. I was not sure if she was a positive or negative



leader. Initially, not fully knowing or understanding Mary Kate I thought, “What a pain,” but in short time and to this day I think, “What a blessing!” Mary Kate is the gift that keeps giving --- to me, to her colleagues, to her students, to the school, and to the profession. Mary Kate is a petite lady. She’s barely five feet tall and weighs no more than one hundred pounds. However, Mary Kate is a force -- strong, determined, smart, caring, reflective, and a tireless worker and learner. My lasting impression of this passionate educator is nothing like my first.

I learned that the start of the present study was also Mary Kate’s first year back to the school district and middle school building where she previously taught various grade-levels for many years. I also learned that Mary Kate was a reading specialist, left the district to teach pull-out reading classes in a neighboring district, and was returning to RMS to teach seventh graders social studies after recently retiring with 25+ years of service in the state’s teacher retirement system. In addition to working as a content teacher on one of the two seventh grade teams, Mary Kate served as the building’s reading committee chair for their external accreditation process.

Initially, Mary Kate lacked confidence in her ability to incorporate literacy within a new context, her seventh grade social studies classroom. However, she experienced previous successes with literacy instruction teaching reading classes and working with small groups of struggling readers on a pull-out basis. As a result she already knew and was using several literacy best practices. This contributed to Mary Kate’s positive sense of efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching, in general, as well as motivated her to learn how to successfully infuse literacy into her new content area. She eagerly and willing

engaged in CLC, which helped facilitate her transformation from a reading specialist to a content teacher and increased her PTE for literacy teaching.

Mary Kate's dual roles (building literacy leader and classroom teacher) and her identity as both a reading specialist and a social studies teacher shaped her CLC experience. Additionally, her transformation was supported by a third role/identity. Mary Kate was also a learner. Throughout her transformation, she focused on student learning and modeled for her students what learners do. Learners and learning became key components of the definition Mary Kate shaped for content literacy and what good readers do. Ultimately, Mary Kate refined several of her existing practices and incorporated new ones as part of her successful change from reading specialist to social studies teacher. She achieved this by engaging in the CLC process, reframing existing or potential teacher and student barriers, and focusing on what is necessary to achieve teacher and student success throughout her journey.

Multiple data sources revealed that although Mary Kate valued literacy instruction across all content areas and had experienced previous success as a reading teacher, she lacked confidence in her own ability to incorporate literacy within social studies. From the very beginning of the CLC, Mary Kate expressed her desire to learn more. On the *Initial Questionnaire*, she stated:

Even though I am an experienced teacher, having worked as a language arts teacher and remedial reading teacher---and with success---when asked 'how do you teach someone to read'---I really can not answer that question. I know what 'feels right' to teach, and I draw on my experience as a student myself--- how I learned to read--- but I am not familiar with

the research and the strategies that specifically target literacy teaching and instruction. I believe I can make some impact on students learning because of the skills I possess as a teacher, but I want to learn more specific information. How do I reach students at the middle grades who lack word attack skills? How do I motivate the student who says, 'I hate to read?' How do I teach the student whose home environment has no print material? Literacy teaching will provide me with tools to meet these challenges. (*Initial Questionnaire*)

Even though Mary Kate lacked confidence for her existing practices, she was confident that she could impact student learning. She was eager to find ways around potential student barriers and believed that "Literacy teaching will provide me with tools to meet these challenges."

Throughout the CLC process she examined her new role and expressed her new thinking related to content literacy. For example, during an interview in the fall semester, Mary Kate shared the following with me:

Before when I was here at RMS, I taught sixth grade and we taught everything and although I always, like reading, I was never very confident on how I was teaching it. I had this textbook that I was supposed to use and all these teacher assistants and ask the teacher blah, blah, blah and ask them to think about blah, blah, blah. I don't know, I guess now I am thinking how reading can be a separate thing when you get to this level. To me it makes more sense to have them practice the reading strategies

that they are going to be more responsible for. They want to do well on the test and stuff. (Interview, 10/11)

Mary Kate continuously thought about what contributed to student and teacher success. In her new role she recognized the importance of reading classes and emphasis on literacy teaching within content classes.

Although she lacked confidence for literacy teaching, Mary Kate was confident in her ability to teach. She shared the following with me after her first observation:

I've had a lot of experience. When I interviewed they said, 'Well, you have never taught social studies before. How do you feel about that?' I said, 'Well I haven't taught that curriculum but I know how to teach.' So I kind of bring that confidence. I should. I have been doing it for so long. (Interview, 10/11)

Mary Kate believed that good teaching was at the heart of student success in all content areas. In addition, only a month and a half into the CLC, Mary Kate recognized that her participation in the cadre was supporting her transition from reading specialist to content teacher. She expressed how the opportunity to apply new and existing practices contributed to her literacy teaching success. Mary Kate responded when asked whether or not students struggled with reading in her social studies class:

Absolutely! I think this -- well, I know this [CLC] has really helped me a lot this year because for the past five years I've been a reading specialist and that is all I did. I didn't realize how much I had learned about teaching reading in the content area, which is what I wanted to try. When I was a reading specialist, people would come to me and say, 'Mary Kate, how do

I teach this lesson?’ I could talk to them about it but I hadn't done it myself. Does that make sense? So this year I am getting to use some of the things I have learned over the past five years and really apply it to a content area. To me that has been an exciting thing for me to do this year. Certainly I have kids at all levels of reading and writing ability. I try and use those good reading practices that I researched and learned about while I was reading all day long, now applying it to content area. (Interview, 10/11)

Mary Kate already knew and was using several literacy best practices. Additionally, she was willing to share them with her colleagues both those within the CLC cadre and with others across the school. During our third cadre meeting after reading and discussing *Tailoring the fit: Reading instruction and middle school readers* (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000), I posed several questions to encourage the group to generate and prioritize a list that would set us on a path to “tailoring the fit” for literacy instruction for their own students. I asked Mary Kate to clarify whether she added “helping students choose books” to the list because this was an area she wanted help with or because it was an area in which she was comfortable helping others. She replied:

I think I feel comfortable in doing that and I have some other strategies and ways to get kids to do that and . . . so I'm--really thinking about guiding kids to making good choices of books that maybe I could share with the rest of the 7th grade teachers how I do that and give some ideas and then have people maybe do it and then maybe at our next team meeting bring that data and just say, ‘How did that go, what worked, what

didn't?' and just to see if that would work . . . A lot of times you'll have kids that say, 'I hate to read,' and a lot of times it's because they have never read something that they enjoyed. So there I always think, well then, we need to step back and guide some choices and guide some direction in there too. (Cadre, 9/13)

Mary Kate's response was an affirmation of her confidence in several practices that she was willing to share with others about how to teach students to select books for independent reading. It also illustrated how she reframed potential student barriers such as lack of interest or motivation to read as an instructional issue ("we need to step back and guide some choices and guide some direction") that could lead to student success.

At this point in time, Mary Kate's GTE beliefs for literacy teaching were positive, which encouraged her to want to influence her colleagues' literacy practices and create positive beliefs for literacy teaching throughout her school. She acted comfortably in her school literacy role one week earlier and shared with her seventh grade teammates during their common planning time a sheet she used to keep track of the "status of the class" during independent reading. Mary Kate desired to share even more practices with her colleagues.

For one of our CLC cadres, we established these three goals and noted them on the agenda:

1. Read, discuss, and share ideas related to our question about how to tailor the fit between what students can read and what we want them to read.
2. Dig deeper into issues connected to our question.

3. Plan for classroom demonstration of related strategies and/or plan for further study/sharing of related issues/strategies.

(Agenda, Week 4, P.M. Cadre)

During this cadre after sharing a teacher-written poem that addressed matching books to students' diverse needs, backgrounds, and interests and reading and discussing a journal article that described a strategy called BOOKMATCH that helps students select books they can and will read, Mary Kate shared several practices such as book pass and book share that she successfully used in her former reading classroom.

First, Mary Kate told what she did for book share. She said:

We had a book share day because if I read a book I want to talk about it and I would get a little egg timer it was like 60 seconds and whoever's name was drawn the egg time went on your desk and when you were ready you would turn it over and the name of my book is and this is kind of what is happening. I said you could either give a brief summary, you could read a paragraph or two from the beginning, you could read the summary on the back or the inside flap about the author but somehow share something about the book. You only had to sell for 60 seconds. There was something about only having to have to do it for 60 seconds, say you had 20 kids you could get it done in 20-25 minutes and it was not as threatening when they all had to do it. And I said if you don't want to talk about your book, read what is on the back or read the dedication and talk about that or read the first 2-3 paragraphs if you want to but you have to keep going for 60 seconds. (Cadre, 9/20)

She also noted that she used this practice with “developmental kids” and that “it was a good way for people to share books, because I might think, ‘Oh, that sounds like a good one!’ and she might want to read that.” (Cadre, 9/20) In addition, Mary Kate noted, “A lot of times I would just do it [book share] when I was in between something, kind of an in between day before we started something new.” (Cadre, 9/20).

Then, Mary Kate explained another practice she used and liked. She shared:

We did a thing I think I called it pass a book and we sat in a circle after they got their books and everybody got a piece of paper and they had a place to write five books down and then a comment. So here is my book, I write down the title and I write down the author. I think I gave them like three minutes to look over the book and then the timer went off and they had to write: I think I would like to read it; looks good; girl book, or whatever and then they would have to pass it on. We would do five of them and then after that time you got to look at five other books and you would hear, ‘Hey, I did not get to see that one,’ or ‘Which one of these do you think you would like to read?’ and then I always collected those and then when they would come and say, ‘I can't find a book,’ I would say let's pull out your book pass sheet. ‘What did you see last time that you thought you might like to read?’ (Cadre, 9/20)

In both of Mary Kate’s examples she addressed how these practices provided ways around barriers such as lack of time and student abilities. She also noted how they contributed to instructional successes by providing ideas for what students might like to



read or an appropriate way to transition between lessons or lesson to use on a shortened class day.

Mary Kate's increase in PTE beliefs for literacy teaching and transition from reading specialist to content teacher were supported by the fact that among her many school-related roles (building literacy leader, middle school teacher, and CLC cadre member) and identities (reading specialist, social studies teacher, and colleague), she was also a learner. Throughout Mary Kate's transition, she focused on student thinking. Thinking was something she believed learners engaged in and was an important component necessary for student success. Therefore, Mary Kate promoted and modeled what learners do with her students. Additionally, figuring out how to get students to think became part of Mary Kate's working definition of what content literacy was. Throughout her transition, Mary Kate was not only negotiating what it meant to be a content teacher, but also what content literacy meant. Thinking was key to her understanding of these concepts.

During one of our initial CLC cadre discussions, Mary Kate shared thoughts regarding her understanding of content literacy and why some teachers were resistant when she said:

I think a lot of teachers feel like that [aren't comfortable with reading] because when they think about, 'Oooh, teaching reading,' I think a lot of times they think about structural analysis, phonics, word patterns, things like that. That's why I'm so glad to see us talking about sustained silent reading time and reading aloud . . . I think a lot of teachers already do a lot of things, they preview the text, they do things with being aware of

vocabulary words, you look at headings, you think about how it's set up, they just don't think about it as reading strategies, and to me it is. (Cadre, 9/13)

In this excerpt, she articulated examples of how literacy strategy instruction fits within content classes such as previewing text, teaching vocabulary, and looking at headings. In addition, she suggested that read alouds and independent reading could be incorporated into all classrooms. Mary Kate also noted that content literacy teaching does not include, “structural analysis, phonics, word patterns, things like that.” Near the end of this CLC cadre she expressed interest in having me share a questioning strategy at our next meeting and indicated the importance of using strategies that promote student thinking when she stated:

If you're talking about questioning because I think that's something as a teacher you know you shouldn't just ask the questions, that's just recall questions, but how do you really ask questions to get them to think. You can get the recall answers, but then you say, ‘Well, what did you learn,’ and it's like [makes a gesture with her hands and face indicating I don't know]--so you're not really thinking. (Cadre, 9/13)

During her first interview, Mary Kate underscored the importance of thinking in connection to learning when she told me:

It is kind of like the old proverb, ‘Give a man a fish he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, he'll eat for life.’ It is kind of like learning, I guess. I hadn't thought about that kind of parallel, because if you get kids to think then they can figure out a lot of things and learn. (Interview, 10/11)

Then, she went on to make a connection between the importance of establishing relationships with students and teaching and learning when she shared:

They really, an old saying in middle school is ‘They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.’ Boy, that's true with these kids. I kind of thought that in sixth grade. Then when I was doing reading specials in eight grade, I had certain kids pulled out. Now that I have a team of one hundred kids that is really true. If you can get that to them and then get them to thinking and learning. (Interview, 10/11)

Her quote suggests that thinking and learning follows the establishment of a trusting relationship. Mary Kate had years of successful experiences at the middle school level and was confident in her ability to establish trusting relationships with her students. Her goal was to gain confidence in her PTE for literacy teaching through participation in the CLC cadre, or, as she stated, “Getting kids to think and find out where they can find the information they want to know more about. That is what this [CLC] is making me do.” (Interview, 10/11). To Mary Kate, thinking and content literacy were intertwined and both important to student and teacher success.

Mary Kate continued to develop her understanding of content literacy and build her confidence with literacy teaching throughout first semester. During a CLC cadre while discussing a professional article, Mary Kate shared with the group, “They also make a point in here is it our goal to teach the content or is it our goal to teach kids to think? Don't we want them to be life long learners and be able to explore and analyze and not just memorize content? I thought, ‘Yes!’” (Cadre, 10/25). The point made in the professional literature was affirmation of Mary Kate’s existing beliefs that content

literacy was about teaching students to uncover content versus teachers covering content. Again, thinking was a key component of Mary Kate's definition of content literacy.

A few weeks later after returning from a conference in which she attended a session presented by Rick Wormeli, Mary Kate read the notes she had scribbled on a handout and shared with her cadre how Wormeli defined literacy:

If we are literate in our subject we can access, analyze, evaluate, and create. He says that the teaching of reading should take all the way through 12th grade to ensure democracy. If you think about democracy being critical thinking, it's going to take instruction all the way through 12th grade, or beyond, if you go to 13th and 14th to be really critical thinkers, and so in middle school they're only half way there and so it's not something that can be dropped at that point. I thought that was, 'Whoa, yeah.' And he said if you gave this definition to your pupils, 'As we are literate on our subject we can access, analyze, evaluate, and create,' who wouldn't want their kids to be able to do that no matter what subject area you taught? (Cadre, 1/8)

This new information added to Mary Kate's working definition of what was literacy teaching, which connected to her existing beliefs that it included helping students to think. Prior research (Hinchman & Moje, 1998) advocated for approaching professional development through a social justice lens. More specifically, Hinchman and Moje suggested consideration of the social and political aspects of adolescent literacy as a way to improve teachers' content literacy practices. However, this was not an angle Mary

Kate or the group sought to explore further beyond her brief mention from Wormeli's presentation.

Participation in CLC supported Mary Kate's PTE beliefs for literacy teaching. This occurred through conversations about new and existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices related to literacy teaching. More specifically, Mary Kate's PTE beliefs for literacy teaching were strengthened through study and practice related to the different types and purposes for which she used text within her social studies classroom. Mary Kate believed that her participation in CLC would lead to new practices that would contribute to student and teacher success.

During a cadre discussion (10/25), Mary Kate reacted to an article about read alouds. She shared the following excerpts from the selection as well as her thoughts:

'Selection should tie reading to pleasure, not pain.' They talked about using nonfiction which made me think about when I am teaching, particularly in history that I ought to look for more nonfiction excerpts. We don't have to read the same books. I try to get away from that--I don't want to read the whole book. For excerpts, 'selections should encourage discussion, application of content material---and to encourage them to consider another way of viewing the world.' I like that thought. 'And to make the content come alive and encourage further reading and inquiry'--- So if you were teaching facts then, whatever your content is, surely there is some way, some where, something that would somehow tie in to what you want the kids to be thinking about. Maybe not learning specific

things, objectives, but to get them to think about what would happen or, you know, more thinking. (Cadre, 10/25)

Mary Kate saw how she could refine an existing practice (read alouds) in her own classroom as well as made a connection to how use of nonfiction/content-related read alouds made sense for her when teaching history as well as for other content teachers. Discussion of the article supported her practices as well as Mary Kate's goal of encouraging colleagues to incorporate read alouds into their instruction. Additionally, Mary Kate connected what she read to her existing beliefs about the role of thinking within literacy teaching.

During several earlier cadre discussions, Mary Kate shared thoughts related to her current practices and use of fiction as well as showed that she was open to expanding the type and purpose of text used in her classroom. For example, when talking about helping students make selections for independent reading, Mary Kate said, "And I tend to talk about fiction, because that's what I like to read, but if you leave it up to them [students], they like to read a biography on a sports figure or something" (Cadre, 9/13). Then, when discussing ways to encourage teachers' use of read alouds as part of the school improvement plan, Mary Kate noted, "I think if you think about literacy, I automatically think about books, but other people might be more comfortable reading from Sports Illustrated, National Geographic. I mean it doesn't have to be a printed book to have literacy." (10/11). Finally, following a classroom demonstration and debriefing on how to conduct a book pass with students, our conversation turned to next steps of what to study and try. When I mentioned to one of the other content teachers in the cadre that there were a lot of great books out there that make great read alouds and would

compliment her curriculum, Mary Kate immediately jumped on the idea and interjected, “Well maybe we can even incorporate read alouds into our social studies class.” (Cadre, 9/27). Mary Kate was interested in helping her colleagues expand their notion of text, because she believed their resistance to literacy teaching was a barrier to helping all students through wide-spread use of read alouds. She was interested in learning more herself about how to incorporate read alouds into her social studies class, because she viewed this practice as contributing to student success.

Several weeks later upon returning from a professional conference, Mary Kate enthusiastically showered each cadre member as they entered the room with a souvenir, which included a picture book for her social studies counterpart that connected perfectly with their state history curriculum and made for an ideal read aloud. Mary Kate beamed as she announced to a colleague as she joined the cadre:

Dorothy, these are some books that they were giving away--*Chasing Vermeer* and then this is the second one [holding up another YA book], and here's a big pack for you. Have you read this? Let's see [holding up a pamphlet for Dorothy to see] this was ‘What's New in Young Adult Literature for Literacy?’ And so, I picked up this packet [referring to the YA Literature pamphlet] and I'm sharing with Rosemary this morning [reaching across the table to pick up a picture book]-- I'm going to see if I can get this book [displaying the picture book for all to see]. It's called, *They Came From the Bronx: How the Buffalo Were Saved from Extinction*, and when the buffalo were decimated on the plains, when that was happening, or previous to that, the Bronx Zoo asked for some buffalo

to be part of their zoo exhibit, and they actually had them sent back from the Bronx to help re-establish herds. Isn't that cool? I'd never heard that before. (Cadre, 11/8)

Mary Kate started making changes by incorporating fiction selections into her read alouds. Experiencing success, she continued to explore additional new practices, different types of text and really started to think deeply about what she wanted students to know and learn, including how was the best way to go about teaching her content so that her students were thinking and learning—not memorizing, both of which she believed were essential components to student success.

By mid-year, Mary Kate acknowledged that she had made “a shift” in thinking about her role as a content literacy teacher. When discussing ways to promote schoolwide use of read alouds, Mary Kate stated:

I think teachers are receptive [to using read alouds] and would like some ideas about how to teach reading. They just maybe don't see how it will apply to the content area and I know that I've taught reading and that has always been my first love, but I got excited this year because I feel like I'm really a reading teacher--I just happen to be teaching social studies content. That is kind of a shift in my thinking and I am pleased about it. (Cadre, 2/14)

However, despite feeling pleased about her shift in thinking and growing confidence as a content literacy teacher, Mary Kate still wanted to learn more and was not yet 100% confident in her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching as evidenced by some of her other remarks. In addition, she continued to focus on finding ways to encourage all of her



colleagues to embrace read alouds and she was not to be deterred by their resistance or lack of interest as a barrier to student success.

For example, Mary Kate expressed interest in learning more about strategy instruction after another CLC cadre member, Margaret, shared how she was teaching strategies in her classroom using the acronym, ICEPAC. Mary Kate listened with great interest as Margaret explained how the acronym was helping her students have a dialogue with text using various strategies good readers used. This prompted Mary Kate's interest in joining Margaret and me on a visit to a teacher's classroom in a nearby town that was successfully implementing strategy instruction as described in *Strategies That Work* (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Hearing Margaret talk about ICEPAC and me describe how this teacher, Judy, influenced strategy instruction across all grade-levels and content areas within her school building also triggered Mary Kate's thinking about her working definition of content literacy and current understanding of strategy instruction. She said:

The thing [ICEPAC] that she [Margaret] is doing, and I think as teachers a lot of us are doing those parts, to have a structure to teach the kids and when they come to my class I am teaching that common vocabulary which makes me think about not --- to me that is what is wrong with our reading comprehension strategies that are just -- where if you had something like this it could be taught to teachers and they could be teaching it to students.

(Cadre, 1/24)

As usual, Mary Kate was not only thinking about how this new information might impact her own instruction, but she also considered this information through the lens of a building literacy leader and how it could be used schoolwide to support student success.

She believed that lack of a “structure” or “common vocabulary” created a barrier to successful implementation of reading comprehension strategies. However, Mary Kate did not get stuck on a barrier, rather, she was interested in learning more.

A light bulb went off in Mary Kate’s head after hearing Margaret discuss what she was learning about ICEPAC and *Strategies That Work*. Although Mary Kate did not articulate her new thoughts about strategy instruction with total clarity in the above excerpt, it can be inferred from her comments that the switch that clicked in her mind had to do with teaching comprehension as a process, perhaps by showing students how to use strategies together as a routine as Margaret was trying, rather than focusing on teacher use of strategies in isolation, which so often amounted to nothing more than a one-shot activity that did not transfer to student use and/or impact student learning.

This evolution in Mary Kate’s thoughts about content literacy and comprehension strategy instruction sparked interest in more focused study of strategy instruction and how it might work in her social studies classroom. Mary Kate added this new information to what she already learned to date via reading and discussing several professional texts, engaging in a variety of professional development experiences (conferences, workshops, classroom observations, cadre meetings, study groups), and she would apply it to what she continued to learn throughout second semester. All of this contributed to and would continue to enhance her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching.

An example of how Mary Kate’s confidence level for literacy teaching was not yet 100% includes when she expressed that she was “experimenting” with students as she was learning and trying new practices and worried that she might have “thrown too much at them” in her excitement to try things. Or, in her own words as she questioned herself

out loud, “It made me think that maybe I – have I thrown too much at them? The kids will ask me if I learned that in literacy class?” (Cadre, 2/14). Mary Kate also noted:

The other thing that has kind of come out of this [trying new strategies] interestingly is that as I've been learning here and trying some different strategies . . . I will say [to my students] my goal is to give you lots of different strategies and maybe this one will work better or go with your style of learning but at least you have different kinds of things you can use while you are learning. Kind of quick recovery, because really I am kind of experimenting on them. (Cadre, 2/14)

Mary Kate's excerpt illustrates how she negotiated implementation of a new practice within her classroom by keeping in mind how it benefited students' success. Additionally, this demonstrates how Mary Kate avoided turning implementation difficulties or missteps into barriers, and was willing to persist with learning and refining new practices in order to support student learning and success. Willingness to persist when learning new practices is a characteristic of teachers with high/positive efficacy beliefs.

Furthermore, as Mary Kate reflected on trying new practices, she stated:

I always think about --- somewhere I read a quote that a teacher makes 100 decisions a day and you don't know if you made the right or wrong decision until you've made it. Teachers don't know if you've made the right decision until you've made it. That is what kind of makes teaching kind of stressful. Well, I didn't know – next time I would do it – I might do it a little differently. (Cadre, 2/14)

Her reflection made public Mary Kate's belief that success is dependent upon the need for teachers to continually think about their practices and how they work within the complex context of their classrooms when doing so. It also lends support to the need for professional development such as CLC that allows for and reinforces teachers as they engage in a process of learning new and refining existing practices within their own classrooms.

Another example that illustrates that Mary Kate did not feel solid in her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching and she believed she was still learning at this point in time includes comments she made in response to a question I posed. The question was posed as part of a discussion the CLC cadre had regarding content literacy training, including university courses and ongoing professional development, and how they both supported teachers with literacy teaching and helping struggling readers. Mary Kate suggested to the group that a possible solution for helping more students succeed with reading would be to, "Hone in on maybe one or two things. Teach every teacher and have them [be] skilled at one or two strategies." (Cadre, 2/21). When I asked what two or three things she would suggest everyone should know and use, she responded:

I think that I would have some ideas. I think that I have some things and then I come to this class and I read a little bit more or I try something and I go, 'Yeah.' You think about that and so I feel like I'm kind of exploring right now. You could probably give me an answer to that question better.  
(Cadre, 2/21)

Although Mary Kate exhibited some degree of confidence in her efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching as a result of shaping ideas by reading professional texts, trying new

things, and engaging in discussions during CLC cadre, she believed she was still learning and figuring things out. Suddenly, in this instance I was no longer her co-learner in the cadre, but the expert. Mary Kate doubted herself and looked to me for answers, when I was simply hoping to have her express what she had learned to date that was working for her and possibly suggest others try them such as using supplemental text in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes and/or teaching students to use comprehension strategies. Or, I also thought Mary Kate might respond by recognizing as a part of our ongoing study that the solution was not as simple as just doing two or three things. Regardless, I was surprised that she did not offer suggestions, especially since she typically is full of ideas and strong in vocalizing her beliefs about the importance of everyone using read alouds and silent sustained reading. I noted her response as unusual and lacking confidence in her own ideas.

As noted in earlier research, it is not uncommon for teachers' efficacy beliefs to dip as they work to successfully implement new practices (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Additionally, efficacy beliefs have been shown to rebound as teachers worked through implementation struggles with the support of a coach. In fact, Mary Kate ended the yearlong professional development initiative expressing much confidence in her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching. However, at this point in time, it seemed as though her confidence took a dip. I noted this as unusual since approximately one month earlier during our second interview, Mary Kate's comments suggested her PTE beliefs for literacy teaching and practices were being supported.

During her second interview, Mary Kate expressed how the CLC process had validated existing beliefs as well as had given her the opportunity to implement practices

that supported her beliefs. The following excerpt describes this in Mary Kate's words as well as her desire to incorporate purposeful reading into one of her social studies lessons:

I think that what I've learned through the literacy cadre and the coaching and discussion and sharing has really validated some things that I've always thought but had never really---because people have, you know, I thought, well, how did I--I don't know it just---how it just kind of was there. But like, for example, I've been kind of slowly going through that think aloud book and there was something in there about purposeful reading and it doesn't make sense. . . . So then I don't know if you've ever looked at our social studies text it is very dry and very heavy reading and just---So I thought okay we're studying this unit and I want it to be purposeful for the kids and I want them to learn something. So then I thought well what would be the best way to do that so it would make sense to them? (Interview, 1/12)

Mary Kate went on to describe how she accomplished making her lesson purposeful by having her students create their own fact sheet based on what they thought was important to know about the country (Turkey) being discussed in the chapter.

In another example, Mary Kate's comments revealed that she started combining the process she was undergoing to think and learn about her own instruction into how she approached instructing/guiding students through a similar process for thinking and learning social studies content. She acknowledged that she knew and used modeling and thinking aloud in her former role as a reading teacher and now recognized how they were beneficial as content literacy strategies. During an interview, Mary Kate expressed:

And they were learning and then one said, 'So are we going to do it this way for our next section?' And I said, 'Well, when we finish our whole unit I am going to ask you to kind of reflect. If this is a good way for you to learn---if this is a good way for you to learn it, then that helps me on what I do.' And it was like they'd never really thought about that--that it goes into a teacher's planning. They learned something new. I think I am thinking more about it and like I said this whole week as I said Sunday when I was reading that think aloud book and I thought I know that modeling and thinking aloud and all of that kind of thing is, you know, I've done that more when I was just doing the literacy reading stuff. But too, really I thought that would be a really good way to help them learn what I was thinking as I go to do this test. It's very heavy and not very interesting so it's really supporting and adding to enhancing what they write down. (Interview, 1/12)

Mary Kate was encouraged because she believed that her students benefited from seeing her model reflective thinking for her own teaching and learning purposes. Additionally, she felt as though they were transferring this strategy to help learn social studies content when she stated, "So it's really supporting and adding to enhancing what they write down." Previous research found that teachers' efficacy increased or was reinforced when teachers recognized student success as a result of their instruction. Mary Kate was encouraged to continue using a familiar strategy in a new context and let the group know via her public acclamation that modeling thinking aloud assisted her students as evidenced by their written responses.

As the yearlong CLC initiative drew to a close, Mary Kate exhibited positive PTE beliefs for literacy teaching. She articulated that she had learned a lot. By knowing what was necessary for student and teacher success, reframing barriers into instructional issues, and viewing CLC as an opportunity to support her transition from a reading specialist to a social studies teacher, Mary Kate's PTE beliefs for literacy teaching increased. Her experience continued to be shaped by her many roles and identities. In addition, her understanding of content literacy and use of different texts for different purposes continued to evolve as she consistently kept her focus on student learning and not on student barriers.

For example, Mary Kate's dual role (building literacy leader and classroom teacher) shaped her CLC learning experience. While reading and discussing professional texts/articles, Mary Kate made connections to her own practice as well as to schoolwide literacy goals and duties. In the following excerpt, she reacted to a clip from a video by Cris Tovani:

Thinking about the whole reading as being deep reading, but when you ask questions you're really getting into it deeper. And if you do all of these things and it makes me think about our textbook and then looking at new textbooks and things--what do they do to encourage kids to think deeply? I mean, for example, we just have done India and there was one sentence on Gandhi, you know. You know that you can bring things in but aren't textbooks thinking about that deep really getting to deep reading? I was just thinking about as we were looking at adopting new text and every year there is a curriculum area that adopts the new text. To



look at maybe that I really hadn't thought about that component of it. I think as a social studies person I would have looked at more content kinds of things. Well, I really need to pay attention to what is written and how it's written and is it going to encourage kids to think more deeply about things, instead of having some fancy cd-rom/dvd thing that you can go to. Will it have a list of supplementary kinds of picture books and resources that I could go to? (Cadre, 4/18)

In addition to thinking about how new knowledge connected to her literacy leader role as a member on the district's textbook adoption committee, this excerpt illustrates how Mary Kate reframed a teacher barrier (textbooks). After gaining new knowledge, she contemplated what was necessary in order to provide students with the type of materials necessary to get students to think deeply about content and experience success. She acknowledged one possible solution when she stated, "You know you can bring things in," then went on to explore how to more directly address and correct the problem by using this new knowledge to guide textbook selections during upcoming adoptions.

As previously mentioned, Mary Kate's transition from a reading specialist to a social studies teacher was supported by the fact that she was a learner. During our last interview she talked about the process of learning, how it can be challenging as well as how it connects to literacy teaching and student learning. For example, in the following excerpt she explained why learning something new can be difficult:

Well I think as an adult we don't like to be put in that position of maybe I'm not quite sure of what I'm doing or I don't know what I'm doing or this or that. But that well I don't know, let's try it and see what happens. It's

okay to admit that I don't know how to do it all. You can't do it all. We don't know how to do certain things and we learn from one another. And that's like really why I try to encourage my kids to do when you talk about the turn and talk or whatever. Like I said for this report. I said Wednesday don't you want to go around and see what the other people have done? I mean can't you learn and get ideas from each other? You don't know it all yet. (Interview, 4/24)

Not only do Mary Kate's comments reveal how learning something new can be difficult, but they also demonstrate the importance of learning and collaboration for kids and adults. Mary Kate believed by being a learner she could improve her instruction and increase student success.

In another excerpt, Mary Kate shared with me her thoughts about the role learning plays within literacy teaching. She stated:

You hope that when you walk out that you've learned something and it's not always a fact or how to spell a word or content. But something either content-related or person-related, or how best you work with something so that you are constantly growing and that's what you want for your kids. You want them to keep on that continuum of wherever they need to go. And so that would be however you do it. And to me like you have people wanting to go into education, teacher training. I mean how do you teach that process? How do you teach that? I don't know. It's messy. It's very messy. (Interview, 4/24)

Mary Kate believed that learning was an ongoing process, a messy process, and that literacy teaching was more than learning facts or content. She also mentioned that this ongoing process needed to be student-centered, or focused on moving students along a continuum based on what they already know towards what they need to know. As usual, Mary Kate's comments were not focused on student or teacher barriers, rather what contributed to student and teacher success.

During our last CLC cadre meeting, Mary Kate shared her thoughts about learning after reading an article, "Supporting First Year Teaching and Beyond" (McDonald, 2004). Mary Kate said to the group:

I think this article--I am thinking back, kind of you know, I mean just talk about our journey this year, and so often, you know, on this trip that I took you get to a place in your life and it is so easy to kind of get in that comfort zone and you push yourself and make yourself do something different and then you start questioning yourself and you start looking and you start saying, well I am doing this because or do I want to do something different, what would be better? And I think that, for me anyway, has been really something that has made me think about, okay, so I am going to teach this last thing or I am going to do this. Why am I doing it? What is the best way to do it and not just go along. (Cadre, 5/16)

Again, Mary Kate acknowledged that learning and doing something new could be difficult. However, despite dwelling on challenges, she pointed to something in the article that justified why it was worth it. She said:

And right at the end where it says, 'They were professionals doing what is best for kids.' You know, if you had any mottos or goals or any mission statement, or anything, if I can keep that in the forefront of my mind when I make decisions about what I do with the kids, what is best for kids, and reminding of that, you know that they are learning. (Cadre, 5/16)

Reframing student and teacher barriers, understanding what is necessary for student and teacher success, and viewing CLC as a tool for improving her instruction in order to enhance student learning are what Mary Kate did throughout the year. All of which contributed to her successful transition from a reading specialist to a social studies teacher with positive PTE beliefs for literacy teaching. Or, as she stated:

Just looking back over the year I feel like I've learned a lot. And I really think all of us that met, well I don't want to speak for all of us, for me anyway, I am conscious about being a content area teacher about bringing in those other kinds of text--newspapers and those kinds of things, teaching kids how to read that. And it makes me think about the years that I spent like as a reading specialist how other teachers would ask for help or my job kind of started out like that. I really didn't think about how powerful that was and how if every teacher just knew that is really powerful and sort of if I got back in that world that's something I would be sure to want to tell and share because it has a lot of value. (Interview, 4/24)

Mary Kate believed she learned a lot, including the importance of supplementing her social studies textbook as a way to help teach students to read non-fiction text. She realized now the power of doing this and communicated it to others.

Mary Kate kept her focus on thinking and learning. Next is an example of Mary Kate figuring out what that looks like during a cadre discussion of the same video with Cris Tovani (Tovani & Stenhouse, 2006) in which Tovani addressed the importance of helping students establish purposes for reading. She said:

You know, I like that whole idea too. You've talked about gradually releasing responsibility and I think about kids here at the middle school. I mean they still can't think about, I mean before they know it they will be in high school and I mean it goes fast. And I think that maybe I need to be clear in my purpose of having to do this is so that not only do I have a purpose of it and share my purpose. And then when I'm not around I'm not going to be with you I want you to have a strategy that you can do on your own. And I like that quote when she said you know you're smarter today than you were yesterday. And ask kids that--how are you smarter today and I was thinking like our projects--how are you smarter today than when you started this project? What have you learned? (Cadre, 4/18)

This quote demonstrates that Mary Kate recognized that student barriers existed. She expressed concern that students do not always possess the skills they need to establish purposes for reading, but rather than blame students she sees the problem as a matter of instruction. Mary Kate made a connection to her own practices when viewing the video and decided that a potential solution to students' lack of skills was to think aloud in order

to model strategy use and gradually release responsibility for learning strategy use to them.

In another example of Mary Kate's focus on thinking and learning, she recognized the importance of ongoing assessment as a way to inform her instruction. As part of this recognition, Mary Kate questioned the purpose of homework. After viewing a video clip (Tovani & Stenhouse, 2006) about teaching adolescents literacy strategies, she wondered out loud whether or not giving students time to do "homework" during class was not a better approach than sending them off to practice on their own. Mary Kate's comments expressed an understanding of her role and responsibility as a content teacher to purposefully teach and assist students versus deliver or cover content in order to impact their literacy learning. More specifically, Mary Kate illustrated this when she questioned, "is my practice . . . busy work or . . . meaningful?" Here is what she said:

I would like to say just one last thing but just having time for homework and--and it made me think that homework is really going to be a time to practice what you've been teaching. Why not let them practice while you're there to supervise? And she was talking about the coaches--you don't just show them how to do it or say you guys practice on your own. You're all together and especially from now until the end of the school year what's wrong with doing it right here? And it would make you think is my practice just because my homework is busy work or are they really practicing as meaningful? (Cadre, 4/18)

During this same discussion, Mary Kate noted that homework was a scaffold or a way to help students instructionally increase their learning from one place to the next.

She stated:

And what was that statement that she said on that tape--those of you that did not do your homework well that's a disadvantage because. So if you really think about the homework you give them helps increase their learning for the next step. And then you didn't do your homework you're really at a disadvantage because you're not ready to scaffold and go to the next (Cadre 4/18)

Mary Kate was clear about what was necessary for student success. She believed that if homework really did help students “increase their learning for the next step” then she could motivate students by helping them see the connection between homework and learning, which she characterized as being “ready” to “go to the next” step.

Overall, Mary Kate expressed positive beliefs about teachers’ abilities to impact student learning through literacy teaching. Her comments made it clear that she believed that literacy teaching was the role and responsibility of ALL teachers. In the following excerpt, Mary Kate spoke to this belief:

I am reminded of this idea, ‘not every teacher is a reading teacher but every teacher needs to teach students to read their content.’ A teacher doesn’t need to teach a student *how* to read but they do need to teach their student how to read their content material. So often you hear teachers comment that ‘the kids can’t read the book/material,’ and those teacher fail, in my opinion, to teach the student how to read that particular content

so the student is not able to learn the material. Students that are unable to read and comprehend the content material don't learn and often become discipline problems. Teachers would rather the focus be on their misbehavior than their inability to read the material. Literacy learning is the responsibility and role of every teacher, not just the reading/language arts teachers. (*Initial Questionnaire*)

Mary Kate articulated a difference between teaching reading and content literacy teaching when she expressed that teachers do not need to teach students “*how to read*,” rather they need to teach students “*how to read their content material*”. However, stating this difference and supporting comprehension instruction in practice required time for Mary Kate to figure out how to make a transition from being a reading teacher to becoming a content teacher. Her transition was a yearlong journey. It is informative to consider where she started by looking at her beliefs about what content literacy and teachers’ beliefs about literacy teaching, in general, looked like in theory at the beginning of her journey. The transformation is best understood when looking at her remarks about PTE. However, in order to lay the groundwork, I begin with GTE.

As the previous quote demonstrates, Mary Kate believed teachers failed to do their job if they did not help their students learn to comprehend subject area text. She viewed successful content literacy instruction as a characteristic of quality teachers. When asked on her participant information sheet to respond to a quote by Bett (1939) (and often attributed to Gray, 1919), “Every teacher is a teacher of reading,” Mary Kate indicated that she believed, “quality teachers have always understood this role and try to fulfill this responsibility.” As a reason as to why this call for help had historically fallen



on deaf ears, Mary Kate offered her belief that “Content area teachers, most often at the secondary level, lack training in teaching reading strategies.” Throughout the course of the yearlong CLC initiative, Mary Kate consistently pointed to training as a possible solution for content teachers’ inability or unwillingness to implement literacy teaching into their classrooms.

Although she acknowledged that student barriers existed, Mary Kate did not dwell on them. Instead, she spoke about possible solutions, of which training was almost always the cornerstone of all solutions. In the following example, Mary Kate did not elaborate on the student barriers mentioned in the question (i.e., low skills, lack of motivation, and home environment variables). Rather, she pointed to lack of training as a teacher barrier and suggested that it is not that teachers do not want to help students. Instead, she suggested that teachers do not know how to help. Mary Kate did not offer to what extent she believed teachers could impact student’s learning through literacy teaching. Instead, her response implied that she believed they could have an impact with professional development in literacy teaching. She said:

Content area teachers are extremely frustrated when students can not read the content material and literacy teaching will help by giving teachers strategies to help students. Literacy teaching that would help teachers increase students’ reading comprehension would be very beneficial. In my experience, content teachers know their content but have had little or no training in literacy practices and don’t know how to help the students read the content. (*Initial Questionnaire*)

Despite recognizing that teachers lacked the knowledge and support necessary to carry out their role and responsibilities with literacy teaching, Mary Kate did not excuse teachers for students' learning. When asked whether teachers should be blamed for students' low reading achievement, she stated:

Teachers are in the business of education. And if students are not learning, are not reading, I believe that it is our job to do something about it. Turning the focus on students and their needs, their learning styles, their strengths – that's hard work, but we are the teachers. It is absolutely true that there are circumstances that we do not and can not control, but I believe that educators have the responsibility to in helping students reach success in learning. (*Initial Questionnaire*)

Again, she avoided blaming students or pointing to student barriers. Instead, she reframed potential student barriers ("circumstances that we do not and can not control") into instructional challenges ("turning the focus on students and their needs, their learning styles, their strengths"). Mary Kate was clear in her beliefs about what was needed for student and teacher success and maintained the belief that teachers mattered most when it came to impacting reading achievement. As she noted on her *Initial Questionnaire*, "A program and/or system is only as good as the teachers. Good teaching is the key to student achievement." In another excerpt, she again demonstrated that she believed that quality instruction was what was necessary in order to overcome potential student barriers such as lack of motivation and poor ability to comprehend when she stated, "Good teaching cannot be separated from motivation and comprehension. I think especially with middle school age students, student motivation must occur before

engagement and learning. Those are essential parts of good teaching.” (*Initial Questionnaire*).

Although, she acknowledged that teachers struggled with fulfilling the charge to incorporate literacy across all content areas, she maintained the belief and hope that this would change with adequate training and support. By the end of the CLC, Mary Kate maintained her positive beliefs about GTE for literacy teaching. However, she emphasized that teachers could make a difference by using strategies and connected her comments to the benefits of specific PD components used within CLC. The link suggests that Mary Kate believed CLC supported teachers’ literacy teaching efforts. Consider Mary Kate’s responses to the following four questions included on the *Follow-up Questionnaire*, noting her references to CLC or some aspect of it, which I, not Mary Kate, underlined for emphasis. A more complete examination of what aspects of CLC impacted Mary Kate’s GTE and PTE is included later in this chapter as part of the findings for the second research question.

First, when asked to what extent did Mary Kate believe that teachers, in general, could impact students’ learning through literacy teaching despite challenges such as low skills, lack of motivation, home environment variables, etc, she responded:

I think all teachers can impact students’ literacy learning if all teachers are given information, support, and encouragement to make that impact. The minimal amount of literacy training and education given in teacher training programs is not enough to prepare teachers for students’ reading needs and when they have students that can not read ‘the book,’ they do not know how to assist those students. If all teachers thought of

themselves as ‘teachers of reading’ and were supported in that belief / practice, differences could be made for learners. *Meeting with colleagues and to focus time and conversation on improvement literacy teaching and learning is a gift.*

Then, when asked what she would say to someone who said, “There’s really nothing teachers can do to improve some students’ ability to comprehend difficult text,” Mary Kate responded:

There are many things that can be done! Just as an adult learner turns to other adults, asks for help, turns to ‘Google,’ when we encounter difficult text, students’ need tools and options to turn to when they don’t understand. Sometimes the first step is recognizing where and when the understanding ‘breaks down’ and then students’ should be given strategies to unlock the meaning. That is learning and education. *The conversations and ideas about comprehension during the literacy cadre meetings added to the quality of teaching and ability to help.*

Next, when asked who she believed mattered most when it came to impacting a student’s ability to comprehend difficult content area text --- the teacher or the student, Mary Kate stated:

Students’ must be set up to learn and learning comes in different stages / depths / complexity. All students’ can learn – perhaps with differences, but the most important person in student learning is the teacher. *Giving time to reflect, to assess, to answer the question ‘what is really important here for my students?’ allows for teachers to refine their skills.*

Finally, when asked how she would respond to the following statement: Teachers have the ability to impact student learning/achievement, despite any barriers, Mary Kate, wrote:

Teachers are dedicated to helping students learn, and content area teachers want their students to be able to read the content. *The literacy initiative encourages teachers to believe in themselves as ‘reading teachers’. . . at least teachers of reading of their content.*

Comments at the beginning of the year were generic and idealistic-sounding. Whereas, comments at the end of the year pointed to specific barriers (teachers’ beliefs and practices) Mary Kate believed got in the way of student success. Consider the following comparison between her responses to the same question. For example, when asked on the *Initial Questionnaire* how middle or high school students learn to read? Mary Kate responded, “Practice, time to read, practice, from modeling, exposure to lots of language, printed word, priority given to importance of reading, time to ask questions, clarify understanding”. When asked the same question again on the *Follow-up Questionnaire*, Mary Kate replied:

Teaching middle school students to read probably doesn’t happen like it should. Teachers assume that the kids know or should know how to read before they reach middle school, and too often, the teachers do not have the skill level/knowledge base to teach those middle school students the reading strategies they need. Middle school students are exposed to a lot of print, they have a lot of text read aloud (I think that happens in a lot of

classrooms), they do a lot of whole group activity, they learn to compensate, they get a lot of help answering the questions from adults.

Although Mary Kate did identify several potential teacher barriers to content literacy throughout the year, she did not devote a lot of time speaking about teachers, in general. Rather, she focused her comments on her colleagues, expressing concern for their collective efficacy beliefs, an aspect of the study that was not an area of focus. Comments about teachers in general were primarily addressed in the *Initial and Follow-up Questionnaires* as noted.

Mary Kate started her professional development journey where she was comfortable – as a reading leader encouraging other teachers, her colleagues, to support student success by promoting and incorporating tried and true strategies (read alouds and SSR). She saw her role as the accreditation team’s reading chair and former special reading teacher as part of her identity as a member of the CLC cadre. Mary Kate functioned within the CLC in this role as a schoolwide literacy leader. Initially, her focus was on getting her colleagues to “buy in” or “get on board” by participating in two of the three reading strategies identified within their school’s literacy accreditation plan (read alouds and SSR). These were both strategies that Mary Kate was familiar with and already incorporated into her classroom, albeit primarily with fiction text. However, her role as a special reading teacher had changed and she was now functioning in a new capacity as a seventh grade social studies teacher. It took some time before Mary Kate was comfortable exploring additional strategies beyond read aloud and SSR within her content area. Additionally, it took time before Mary Kate understood how she could modify both of these practices so that they better supported the non-fiction and subject

specific demands of her social studies curriculum and lessons. However, in the end, participation in CLC strengthened her existing positive general efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching and increased her personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Mary Kate knew what was necessary for student and teacher success, reframed student and teacher barriers, and used CLC as a tool for enhancing her literacy teaching practices.

### **Assertion One**

*Participation in Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) positively changed participants' personal sense of teacher efficacy (PTE) beliefs for literacy teaching and reinforced existing positive general sense of teacher efficacy (GTE) beliefs for literacy teaching because participants believed they were responsible for student learning, framed student and teacher barriers as instructional challenges, not student problems, and viewed CLC as a tool to help solve their problems and achieve student and teacher successes.*

The participants entered the study already possessing high or positive General Sense of Teacher Efficacy (GTE) beliefs for literacy teaching. They believed that all teachers, in general, could and should make a difference in student achievement through literacy teaching, despite obstacles they might encounter. Or, as Mary Kate stated at the start of the study:

Teachers are in the business of education. And if students are not learning, are not reading, I believe that it is our job to do something about it. Turning the focus on students and their needs, their learning styles, their strengths – that's hard work, but we are the teachers. It is absolutely true that there are circumstances that we do not and can not control, but I

believe that educators have the responsibility to in helping students reach success in learning. (*Initial Questionnaire*)

Each of the participants clearly understood that student learning was their core business and they approached their work as such. As a result, they maintained a strong sense of GTE for literacy teaching throughout the study and approached participation in CLC as an opportunity to enhance their own Personal Sense of Teacher Efficacy (PTE) beliefs for literacy teaching.

Although participants started the study with low or negative PTE beliefs for literacy teaching they owned responsibility for student achievement and wanted to improve their literacy teaching so that they could impact all of their students. As a result, they viewed participation in CLC as an opportunity, or a tool, for improving their existing instructional practices and solving or overcoming instructional challenges. They articulated what was necessary for student and teacher success, reframed student and teacher barriers, and engaged in this collaborative process in order to enhance student learning through improved literacy teaching. Their participation in CLC resulted in increased levels of confidence, which in turn enhanced their PTE beliefs for literacy teaching.

The next section addresses the second assertion for research question two.

### **Question Two: Aspects of CLC that Contributed to Participants' PTE and GTE Beliefs for Literacy Teaching**

Over the course of the study, I was able to gain insight into aspects of CLC that participants' thought were beneficial by paying attention to their words spoken during weekly CLC cadres and one-on-one interviews conducted three times over the year.



Their words provided me with feedback regarding aspects of CLC they perceived to be working and those that were not. By paying careful attention to what participants were saying, always striving to understand their needs, and making use of CLC's flexible design, I was able to deliver what participants said they wanted in order to support their efforts. However, I was able to analyze for emergent themes across the entire study once participants completed the *Follow-up Questionnaire* and this data source was added to other existing pieces. The *Follow-up Questionnaire* provided participants with the opportunity to reflect over their entire year and respond to a range of questions that both directly and indirectly addressed the second research question.

**Themes that emerged to support assertion two.**

Participants expressed several different aspects of CLC that had an impact on their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Four different themes emerged from the data. They include: (a) access to a variety of professional learning resources, experiences, and instructional materials, (b) time and opportunity to try new practices within the context of their own classrooms, reflect on new learnings, and participate in ongoing professional collaborations, (c) opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on a regular and ongoing basis, (d) access to and support of a literacy coach. Figure 8 visually represents how these themes combined from multiple data sources and address research question two through assertion two.

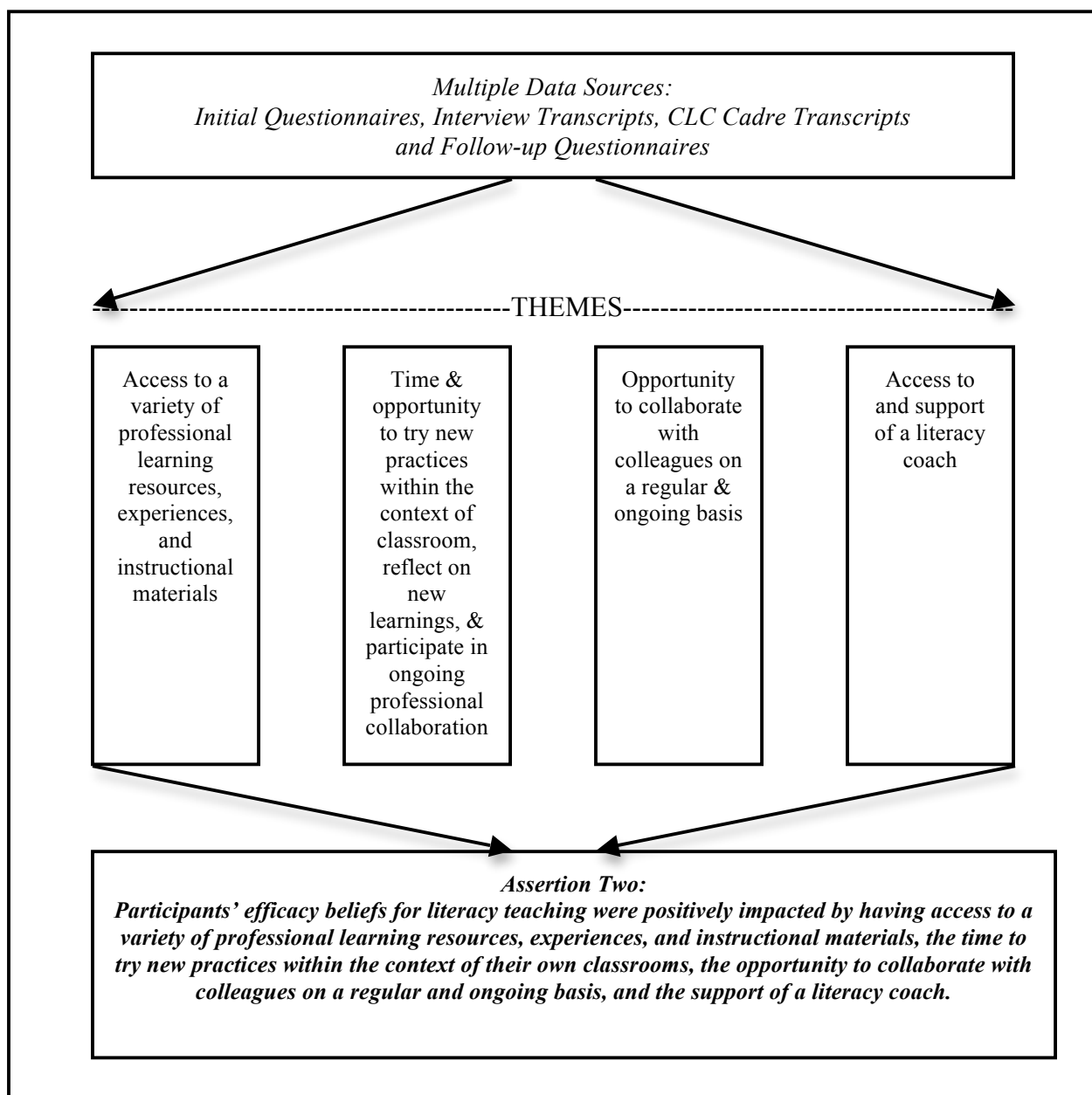


Figure 8. Heuristic for emergent themes to support assertion two.

*Access to a variety of professional learning resources, experiences, and instructional materials.*

Due to the flexible design of CLC, I knew that I needed to constantly identify and share resources and materials as well as create professional experiences that matched

participants' need. As a result, I aimed to provide "just in time" information and opportunities to support participants. This emerged as a theme that participants' believed was an important aspect of CLC and supported changes to their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

The information within the literature review and the resource list noted in Appendix G were not identified and shared as a body of knowledge to be understood and accepted during CLC cadre. Rather, an overview of ideas and information contained within the review and the appendix were shared throughout the study to serve as starting points that needed to be "contextualized and reconstructed by individual teachers" (Richardson & Anders, 1994, p. 207). The list grew as articles, books, videos, and more were added throughout the study at different "need-to-know" points-in-time that arose from participants' needs, interests, and questions.

In the following excerpt, Katherine made a connection between what she learned from reading research and her literacy teaching and how this impacted her efficacy for literacy teaching. She expressed:

I feel that I am more prepared now on how to teach students literacy skills because I have been able to look at reading research. I know now good readers can make predictions, ask questions, make connections, summarize, retell, etc. and that my struggling readers need to gain these skills and understand the importance of what good readers do. Through strategic instruction giving students the tools they need to navigate through text; I have done a better service to my students literacy abilities. I feel I have not come full circle because I have so much to learn but I

have learned so much considering I knew nothing before. (*Follow-up Questionnaire*)

Mary Kate also spoke about the importance of having access to resources (professional articles) and she noted the value of having enough time to study as well as the chance to contextualize new information. She stated:

Well, I've really enjoyed all of the articles and the research that you brought to us. Because there again I've taught for a lot of years but I haven't probably spent as much time reading professional journals and articles and things. And that's been really helpful and I've enjoyed that. And I've got stacks of things to kind of go through and go through again and look at again at it, because it's all out there is so much research out there that proves that this is the way, at least look at these things and make it your own and you start pulling from all of those different things.

(Interview, 4/24)

Mary Kate's comments also suggest that she believed it was important to stay current with the "research out there" because it offered a way toward teacher and student success by providing a proven path teachers could follow and "make it [their] own."

In addition to sharing excerpts from professional texts, journal articles, videos, Young Adult and Children's Literature, videos and more during CLC, I strived to provide participants with as many resources as possible that they could keep. Whenever I received sample trade books, professional texts, and student instructional materials from publishers and they related to the participants' subject areas, grade-levels, or interests, I gave them away. In addition, I frequently shared personal copies of resources and made

recommendations for purchases that were supported by the participants' principals. Participants' comments identified that they perceived these materials and resources as valuable. For example, Katherine stated:

I really took a lot from the resources and books that were given to me as well as the teaching ideas of how to help my students! I got to see how gathering together class sets of books really got my students interested in the topic we were learning. How strategy use such as making connections, inferring and summarizing can help students begin to gain skills that will help them in reading in all contents. All of these things helped me through this year teaching 10th grade English which I knew nothing about.

*(Follow-up Questionnaire)*

Participants also identified professional opportunities or “experiences” within this emergent theme as important which took many different forms. They included the opportunity for participants to take part in an after school study group during which time we discussed professional texts that we read, shared resources and ideas, wrestled with ideas and challenges, generated ideas, and crafted plans that grew out of our time together and work during the school day. Professional experiences also included what were referred to by participants as “field trips.” Approximately five “field trips” or extended professional development opportunities were planned and attended by cadre members in an effort to enhance participants’ learning, and, in some cases, provide access to existing models of classroom practices group members were exploring. The extended professional development opportunities typically involved attending an “event” such as a presentation or demonstration and was always followed by a question and answer session

with the presenter as well as a debriefing session with me and the rest of the cadre members to unpack our learning and plan for next steps.

Katherine identified several experiences that contributed to her confidence for literacy teaching. She stated:

I am more confident in teaching English now because it was like college for me. Because my degree is in speech and drama I was able to see good lessons, resources and strategy use for my students. I am ready to begin my masters to gain even more knowledge! I really feel like this gave me the opportunity to read research about good reading practices, listen to leading researchers (Cris Tovani, Steph Harvey, Jeffrey Wilhelm) at conferences and be able to take what I learned right back to my classroom and see it work. Teaching students what good readers do through strategic instruction works and I have begun to see students make sense of text by being able to talk about it using the activities and resources I learned. All of this contributes to me as a teacher today. (*Follow up Questionnaire*)

During our final CLC cadre, Margaret expressed why she believed collaborating with teachers beyond RMS's walls was beneficial. When she spoke of the benefits, Margaret could not resist sharing several new ideas she gained as a result of her new connections. Margaret told the group:

And another thing I like about this [CLC] is we have had doors open to us where we get new ideas. It is not just our own ideas anymore and it is like 'Wow! That is really cool' and 'Can I try that?' and, you know, 'I discovered this!' and 'Do you want to do this?' And not just with us

because I have met some people through Kathy and they have had some really cool ideas like Susie. Susie came down and she had a really cool idea [adapted from the children's book, *Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster* (Frasier, 2000)]. She does a vocabulary parade with her sixth graders and that is right up what my kids need--for the kids they just take all of the different vocabulary and then they kind of make a sentence for it and a definition and the origin of the word and all of these different things and they have a little parade and they dress like the word and they have the librarian read off what they are doing. It is kind of like a fashion show . . . She [Susie] told me about a book by Van Allsburg [referring to *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg (1984)] . . . so, what she did I thought would be great to do with my class is she had them pick a picture and they had to write a story to go with it and it had to be titled and they had to use the line [from the book about the picture] either at the beginning or the middle or the end---somewhere in their story it had to say . . . So, anyway, I just have met people that have had really awesome ideas and going to Dorothy's classroom and then going to the school in Spring City, and just seeing all of the different things that are going on kind of makes, what do I say, up to date. (Cadre, 5/16).

Getting ideas from her RMS colleagues was important, but Margaret definitely enjoyed seeing what else new was happening outside of her school building. Reading about other classrooms and gaining ideas from reading professional texts and articles was one thing, but having the chance to observe and visit with other teachers definitely had a strong

impact on Margaret. She believed it contributed to bringing her literacy practices “up to date.”

Margaret hoped that next year she could continue to visit other schools and possibly allow visitors to come into her classroom and learn from her. She felt strongly about the power of collaboration both within her school, her district, and beyond. She stated:

Hopefully, next year I can still visit some different places like that because that was so helpful to me. And so to go on as many field trips to see people who are working because the ideas are the only way that teachers get ideas is by sharing. And hopefully some people will come in here and take some things out of here too and I try to share them with everybody else that I meet. That has been fun for me. And just time to sit and talk to Jolene and Marion, you know we're so in our little pods that I don't get to see what is going on upstairs. And I really feel bad that the eight grade has dropped out, because I wanted to see what they were doing as well. And you've been able to work with the high school and that has been great. It's an eye opener. It just helps you to know where these kids are and where you've got to push them to before they go on. (Interview, 4/24).

***Time and opportunity to try new practices within the context of their own classrooms, reflect on new learnings, and participate in ongoing professional collaborations.***



Richardson and Anders (1994) pointed out the need for new ideas, beliefs and information to be “contextualized and reconstructed by individual teachers” (p. 207). As a result, these researchers built in opportunities for teachers to do so within the design of their “new form of staff development” that was used within their Reading Instruction Study (RIS). Likewise, this was an intentional component of the design of CLC. In addition, CLC was designed to provide participants with time and multiple opportunities across time to study, practice, reflect, and collaborate. More specifically, the design supported opportunities for participants to try out new practices within the context of their own classrooms. Not surprising, specific examples related to time emerged as a theme from participants’ words as an aspect of CLC that they identified as important to their efficacy development.

During our first interview, Margaret spoke to me about the impact CLC had on her to date. Although reluctant to enthusiastically endorse the process after only one month in action, Margaret did offer that she “enjoyed this class” (Interview, 10/11). She believed that the process caused her to think about her instruction and provided her with some ideas. She stated:

I think I think about my instruction a little more. I try and think about it more when picking out books. I’ve got some good ideas that I think might get the kids motivated. I don't know. We haven't done a lot yet. We've done that lesson and talked about some different things. You know there were some things in what good teachers do [referencing an article by Richard Allington] that I really like because I have been here for three years. I was kind of the new one for awhile and now I'm not. When I first

got here it was mostly follow along and get my feet wet. It was such a big change coming from first grade to sixth. I just wanted to make sure I was meeting their needs and not babying them too much. I noticed it seemed like everything was, 'Read this lesson and do the project. Read this lesson and you do this.' In the book or in the articles we've read good teaching is not like that. You can stop and take time on this. It's not always a free project. I wish I had the exact paragraph and I said it to another teacher and he said, 'Exactly!' I think that may be that is a lazy way or how the older teachers learned to do things. Their performance doesn't have to be based on a project or doing something. (Interview, 10/11)

The article, "What I've Learned About Effective Reading Instruction from a Decade of Studying Exemplary Elementary Classroom Teachers" by Richard Allington (2002) resonated with Margaret and her existing beliefs about literacy instruction. In the article, Allington described six common features of what he called the six T's of effective elementary literacy instruction (time, texts, teaching, talk, tasks, and testing). The article was intended to be a springboard for a conversation about how these features do or do not work at the middle school level. Margaret recognized that her current literature textbook and literacy practices did not match what Allington described as features within exemplary classrooms. From the beginning Margaret believed that she could make a difference and she desired to make changes. As expressed, she believed that she had been hindered by the teacher-centered practices of her team members and was not in a position as a "new" member of the team to suggest change. Now that Margaret was beginning her third year at RMS and together with access to new information about

exemplary practices and the support of me as her literacy coach, she was positioned to break the “assign and assess” cycle of teaching and figure out how to differentiate and target instruction to meet her students’ needs. Providing Margaret with time to study and reflect resulted in her thinking about trying new things in her classroom.

Also during our first interview, Margaret described her understanding of the CLC, what she liked about it, and what she would like to see more of. She began as follows:

I would say we are just forming a group. A group of teachers that can get together and reflect on different teaching styles or different methods or different things that have worked in our classroom. (Interview, 10/11).

She continued by expressing what aspect of CLC she liked and what aspect she would like more of. She stated:

I really like the Thursday night groups when we can get together and talk and just discuss different things because we are not allowed that time. We just don't have time for it. This is kind of like making us have time for it out of our day. As far as what I would like to see more of--the lesson we had in my class--I thought that worked really well. Mary Kate said she would give me some more of those little sheets that we were keeping track of their books. I need some different ones. We just haven't gotten together or she had been too busy to get it into my box. (Interview, 10/11).

Margaret mentioned the Thursday night group, which was the optional afterschool study group or one of several professional opportunities that were available to participants and previously mentioned in a different emergent theme. During other conversations she also

spoke favorably about the after school study group. She particularly liked that the group consisted of teachers from both the middle school and the high school. Preparing students for the next level beyond her classroom and working to establish a district-wide literacy instructional continuum was of great interest and importance to Margaret. Unfortunately, after a few meetings the high school teachers dropped out of the after school study group. This prompted Margaret to also stop attending. As much as she wanted to participate, the real draw for her was the opportunity to collaborate with the high school teachers. Margaret felt she had adequate time to collaborate with her middle school colleagues during the weekly cadre sessions. Since participation in the after school cadre required special transportation and child care arrangements for her children, Margaret opted to attend only every so often after the high school teachers stopped coming.

After mentioning the Thursday night study group, Margaret went on to talk about the importance of having time to get together with her colleagues. Although she did not call it by name, I believe she also valued having time to meet with colleagues every Tuesday as part of her CLC cadre when she said, “This is kind of like making us have time for it out of our day.” Regardless, Margaret appreciated time to collaborate with her colleagues. She realized that lack of time was typically a barrier to collaboration and even contributed to the ability to follow through with requests that were generated as part of the time she did have to work with her colleagues. Margaret also stated that she liked the collaborative model lesson that took place in her classroom and identified it as an aspect of CLC of which she would like to see more. In addition, she valued resources that were shared such as the status of the class sheet she received from Mary Kate.

Katherine also identified time as an important aspect of CLC. However, she did not initially perceive the amount of time required for participation in CLC as a plus. Instead, she feared it would be an obstacle, despite her desire to benefit from participating in CLC. During one of her first CLC cadres, Katherine stated:

I know that I'm going to benefit from it [cadre], but I'm still losing class time everyday for me being a first year teacher, I was really skeptical. I'm still really protective over the kids in my class and I want to be able to be there learning with them, because that's pretty much what I'm doing this year, and I hate that, and I hate leaving them with somebody different every week. I don't know. That would probably be the biggest obstacle. I kind of feel like I'm losing out, and of course, the time thing. Everything is new in my life. I did just get married. I do kind of want to spend some time at home, and I live an hour away, you know, all of that fun life stuff that I've never experienced because I've been in college for the last five years. (Cadre, 9/8)

Katherine's comments reveal her fear that the amount of time required for participation in CLC might result in more negatives than positives. However, by the end of the year, she identified time as an important component that contributed to her confidence as a literacy teacher. Katherine expressed:

It seems as though it has been a once in a lifetime opportunity to be able to learn on the job as opposed to teach, teach, teach. It has given me time to use what I have learned while building my confidence that I can help my students read! (*Follow-up Questionnaire*)

Both time and opportunity to practice within the context of her job were important to Katherine.

Mary Kate also spoke about time – time to think and reflect as well as time to learn within the context of her job. From early on, Mary Kate perceived the CLC as a tool to help improve her instruction. During her first interview when asked to share with me her understanding of the CLC process to date, Mary Kate described it as an opportunity, highlighted her eagerness to learn and belief that it acted as a stimulus for thinking about her instruction. Immediately, she recognized that it was different in its approach from other professional development efforts in which she had participated. She liked that I referred to it as a process and explained why stating:

First of all, I love that it is a process because just like I want my kids to think, I appreciate you getting me to think. As adults you kind of get into a rut in your job doing the same things over and over again. I appreciate that stimulus to get me to think about what I am doing. I really like that.

(Interview, 10/11)

Not only did she describe participation in CLC as a vehicle to get her to think differently, but she also expressed excitement and appreciation for the opportunity to grow professionally in a manner similar to how other professionals engaged in ongoing training—an aspect of the CLC that she found entirely different from earlier professional development experiences. In the following excerpt she recounted the conversation she had with her brother when traveling to the western part of the state two weeks following the start of the CLC. She stated:

I said, 'Patrick, get this. I've been a teacher in education for over thirty years and this is the very first time a district has come to me and said, Mary Kate, we would like you to be better at your craft and here is how we are going to help you. You don't have to do it on Saturday and you don't have to do it in the summer. You don't have to do it after you've worked all day. We are going to let you meet with a professional and other colleagues for three hours once a week. The first hour you are going to talk about teaching and strategies. The second hour you're going to try it. And here is the crazy thing, the third hour you get to come back and talk about what you have learned.' Never in my teaching career have I had that opportunity. Because my brother is a business person, so when he needs training what do they do? They send him to really great places. It's not during summer vacation and not on the weekends. It is during the regular employment time. So I said, 'Hey, they are doing that for me. Three hours once a week!' Some of the other teachers were going, 'Well, I don't want to be away from my class that much.' My thought is number one, what an opportunity! I don't know who to thank for giving me that opportunity. (Interview, 10/11)

Mary Kate also recognized that some of her colleagues perceived the amount of time required for participation in CLC as a barrier. However, Mary Kate did not agree. Typical of her practice of reframing barriers into instructional opportunities, Mary Kate shared how she responded to her colleagues' concerns. She recalled:

But then I said, ‘Hopefully, I’m going to learn so much during that time that I am going to be that much more effective all the other hours I’m with my students.’ I am so appreciative of being able to do that. I know some people said, ‘Well, I’m probably not going to be teaching that many more years.’ I am thinking, ‘But now is the time, the time when you have all that experience. Now this is making you think and look at it a little differently. Instead of not just fading out, but going out, why not be doing something new and exciting?’ I don’t know. I love it. I really love it . . .

(Interview 10/11)

During our second interview, Mary Kate said to me, “I think that what I’ve learned through the literacy cadre and the coaching and discussion and sharing has really validated some things that I’ve always thought but had never really [pause] how it just kind of was there.” Despite already knowing and using various literacy practices, Mary Kate acknowledged that her participation in the CLC added to her toolbox. Although, she seemed most excited about how the process contributed to being more reflective and as a result becoming more purposeful in her teaching. As she explained:

So anyway, it certainly has given me some ideas. And it has really made me think more about what I’m doing. I’ve always been conscious, but I’m trying to do that even more. Think about learning and what I want. What

I want the outcome to be. What I want them to learn. (Interview, 1/12)

Mary Kate’s excitement about being more reflective was related to the fact that this skill linked to instructional improvement. As she reasoned to me, “Because if you reflect on what you do and did it, then you can purposefully do it again. Or, if it didn’t work, then



purposefully not do. It's not shot gun. It's purposeful." (Interview, 1/12). In other words, being reflective leads to purposeful instruction. Mary Kate recognized that providing teachers with time for reflection is important and that participation in the CLC not only allowed her the time to engage in reflective practice, but it encouraged it. The following excerpt captured this sentiment when Mary Kate said:

Sometimes teachers really never spend much time thinking about [how theory connects to their practice] and it's really this group that has been great and really just has been great for me because I've been forced to think about it. So why is it jibing? Why? What do I need to do differently to get them [her students] more on the task of reflection and not so read this article . . . (Interview, 1/12)

Mary Kate stressed ways that CLC was different from other professional development she has experienced and highlighted one particular difference that she believed made a significant difference for her. During her second interview, Mary Kate stated:

And the reflection time in our Tuesday classes. I love that. I think that I have told you that before you know I have had lots of professional [development] and lots of information--never ever hardly had time to sit and think about what worked. And you know it will become a part of my practices. It's not something that somebody gave me to do. It's something that I'm just going to do now because I'm discovering how it works kind of on my own. (Interview, 1/12)

Mary Kate indicated that “reflection time” was important to her, because it allowed her the opportunity to consider new information in light of her existing practices and figure out how it might work within the context of her classroom.

However, as the following excerpt illustrates, Mary Kate believed being able to connect what she learned during CLC cadre to her own classroom had an even greater impact than other professional development experiences such as attending workshops.

Mary Kate noted:

It's not like going to a workshop during the summer or going on Saturday or something you get to think about how it really connects with what you're doing that much more or what you did that morning being the next day. So that's another reason I think the model [cadre] is really powerful because it, it's just like when you put me on the computer and you show me how to do all these things and I don't have to use them, I'm not going to remember. I mean so this [CLC] we're talking about it and then you get to go back and see how it fits and how it's applied. So that's been great too. (Interview, 1/12)

Mary Kate felt the cadre supported her success by providing her with the opportunity to learn in context by applying and reflecting on how the new learning fits with her current beliefs and practices.

By the end of the year, Margaret’s confidence and PTE beliefs for literacy teaching had increased. In addition, she made significant changes to her literacy practices. During our third and final interview and on the *Follow-up Questionnaire*, Margaret mentioned specific aspects of the CLC initiative that she felt impacted her;

several which she already mentioned earlier in the year. Margaret identified aspects that impacted her literacy teaching and ability to impact student learning when she stated:

Time spent discussing, collaborating, and reflecting with our literacy coach was absolutely wonderful. I also thought the field trips to see other schools and teachers were very helpful. It allowed me the time to ask questions and see other ways that student learning could take place.

*(Follow-up Questionnaire).*

During her third interview, I asked Margaret to share with me her thoughts on how she connected what we did during our weekly CLC cadre meetings with what she did in her own classroom. She replied by stating:

The articles that you have been giving us have been really helpful because you kind of read and that gets your mind thinking, 'Oh yeah, I'm noticing that in my class' or 'That is a really good idea. I think I'll try that.' That has really helped seeing different approaches to reading and read alouds and writing. That has really helped, because I've taken a lot of those things back and tried them in here. And the videos, those have helped too. And then, just time to sit and think, you know, and talk to other teachers and see what we could do together to help our school as a whole that time has been valuable. You know, I wish--I don't think they'll allow us to be pulled out every week again for another year, but if they would I would do that in a minute. Just it's been worth it--all of it. It has made connections for me between the reading and the writing and the read alouds and what I give them and the whole approach I've tried to change from what I was

doing before. I wish I had what I was doing before. I didn't feel I was teaching. It didn't feel like I was really reaching them or teaching what I could. (Interview, 4/24).

Margaret not only enjoyed reading and discussing professional articles and videos that provided her with new information, she believed it was important to have the opportunity to take these ideas back into her classroom and try them in context. In addition, Margaret valued the time she had to collaborate with colleagues around school-wide literacy goals. Time to “sit and think” as well as to “talk to other teachers” was important to her. She believed the amount of time dedicated to the CLC was valuable, and although she saw time as a potential barrier to having it occur again next year, given the chance she indicated that she would participate “in a minute” because “it has been worth it – all of it.” Margaret also believed what happened during her CLC cadre connected to the new instructional approach for literacy teaching that she worked to change over the course of the year.

***Opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on a regular and ongoing basis.***

All three participants spoke about the importance of having the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on a regular and ongoing basis. They believed this to be an important aspect of CLC. One reason why participants might have valued collaboration so much is they believed similar opportunities to learn, share, reflect, and support one another did not exist in their schools. Regardless of where participants were in their professional careers—new, mid-career, or veteran—they appreciated the chance to learn with and from their colleagues during the school day.

Mary Kate shared what she liked about CLC during her second interview. She noted, “we learn so much with each other sharing and talking about and supporting . . . I just thought that was kind of weird about the teaching profession [working in isolation].” (Interview, 1/12) Being able to collaborate with other professionals to share, talk, and support one another, rather than work in isolation, was something that Mary Kate valued.

By the end of CLC, Mary Kate reaffirmed that she believed having the opportunity for weekly contact over the course of the school year was important. When she mentioned this aspect of the CLC during one of our cadre meetings, it came out of her comments about teacher barriers to making changes. As Mary Kate did so many times throughout the CLC, she reframed a barrier as an opportunity. In this instance, she acknowledged that change could be difficult and that the amount of time and commitment required for making changes through participation in the CLC could be an obstacle for some. However, she recognized that the amount of time and frequency of the CLC were also what contributed to her success. Mary Kate reflected with the cadre:

It is really easy to settle back and I think the weekly meeting, you know, it would be like Tuesday, and it was like, oh gosh, I have to get lesson plans ready, but then, you know, I have felt that just when I have been gone, when I have missed two or three weeks with you all it is just that weekly contact. It is so important to make because we don't see each other unless it is here. Unless we pick up the phone and call or happen to run into each other in the commons. But their schedule is different than mine so when I am off during classes and we don't connect that time either and it is really hard. (Cadre, 5/16)

Mary Kate recognized many challenges associated with teachers' schedules such as only having time to meet briefly with colleagues in the hallways between classes, in the parking lot, commons, or by telephone as well as conflicting schedules that prevented meeting colleagues when more time was available during planning periods. She obviously valued the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and attributed the sacrosanct time carved out of their schedules for weekly contact as an important aspect of the CLC that allowed for collaboration.

During Mary Kate's third interview she explained:

So it has been really great I think for me to have a chance to talk and be around other people of like mind like that. Because it really reemphasizes that yeah that is important and if some of the content for state testing and all of that yeah that has to be there too, but actually for life long learners, being able to read and understand and decipher and enjoy and pick up pieces and just to be aware of what's out there. I think that's really been purposeful teaching just really encourage me and kind of helped me think about what do I do and how do I do it and all of that. So I've learned a lot, Kathy. And when I think back, I've taught for a long time and I've always thought that I was a pretty good teacher, but I've learned a lot more this year. And I think that I'm better than if I hadn't of done this class. I think that I'm a better teacher now than I was a year ago and so that's huge to take away from our group. (Interview, 4/24)

Mary Kate attributed her professional improvement to participation in the CLC cadre, or what she referred to as "our group" or "this class". More specifically as she explained,

her learning resulted from collaborating with other like-minded people. It was the opportunity to talk and be with colleagues as she made sense of how to prepare students for the demands of state assessments, while also preparing them to be lifelong learners. Again, she referenced the importance of time for reflection as contributing to becoming more purposeful in her teaching.

Crediting the group for her success/learning validated that Mary Kate understood and embraced the CLC design. The CLC design embraced a co-learner approach in which I served as a literacy coach who was a co-learner, not expert, and all members were valued for possessing expertise in a variety of areas. Members' existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices were considered important content of the CLC. Not only were members' expertise acknowledged, they were encouraged to share them with the cadre.

Collaboration was something Margaret valued and desired too. Specifically, sharing resources and ideas was something Margaret liked about CLC and was an aspect she wanted to see extended beyond her CLC cadre and practiced by her sixth grade team members. During a cadre meeting, Margaret shared her thoughts about this. She said:

The other thing is I came from grade school where everyone was like family and shared everything. No one was like, 'Oh, you can't.' It was like, 'Oh, look what I found to try!' and it was wonderful. If you went to a workshop then everyone could share off of you and I just loved that. That is part of why I like this class is you guys have really good ideas. So I want to share that with them without them feeling like I am pushing it on them. (Cadre, 12/13).

Margaret had reservations about sharing ideas from her CLC cadre with her team members, because as she told her cadre earlier, she received mixed messages from her team members when she did share. First, they were upset with her that she had not shared something new that she was trying in her classroom “so they could do it too” and then they were annoyed when she did share and told her she “was trying to tell them exactly how to teach too specific.” Margaret told us, “I don’t want to alienate them.” (Cadre, 12/13). However, Margaret was interested in negotiating a way to extend what she viewed as a positive part of the CLC, sharing new ideas, to include her team members.

By the end of the year, Margaret continued to express concern about being the only member of her sixth grade team who participated in CLC. Despite Margaret’s enthusiasm for what she personally gained from participating in CLC, she was worried about how the work she did with her sixth grade students would continue to be supported and developed next year by her seventh grade colleagues who did not participate in the CLC and who were using a textbook-based approach in language arts. This contributed to Margaret’s continued feelings of low collective efficacy beliefs (CTE) for literacy teaching, something that was not a focus of the present study but was identified as part of Margaret’s comments. She shared with me during our final interview:

And I'm uptight because I know that the writing isn't going to be the same. I know it's not. The English teachers for the seventh grade weren't in this [CLC] and I know that it's [7<sup>th</sup> grade language arts] totally different. I feel like I'm the only person that's in the sea. I'm floating around and trying to



get everything up off the ground from the bottom of the sea. (Interview, 4/24).

Margaret's participation in CLC solidified her feelings about the importance of collaboration and her desire to create a unified literacy instructional continuum. Throughout the year Margaret sought to learn more about what happened instructionally at different levels (seventh grade, eight grade, high school) in order to inform her own instruction and efforts to adequately prepare her students for the next step. She occasionally indicated disappointment that teachers from various grade levels (both middle and high school) dropped out of the CLC. Margaret viewed this as a barrier to both student and teacher success, but continued to work hard to improve her own instructional practices regardless. In the following excerpt, Margaret explained to me her understanding of the CLC cadre, its purpose and importance to her and her fellow cadre members. She stated:

It's [CLC cadre] just a way that you connect with those teachers [fellow cadre members] and to reinforce what we're doing and bounce ideas off of each other and pick up new ideas and just talk about things. What we're noticing the kids are doing and what we need to do for them. Because if I don't talk to those teachers in seventh grade and I don't know that they're having issue with this. You know maybe I can start addressing it in sixth grade so that when they get up there they won't have those issues. And I think it's important for them to know where these sixth graders are when I send them off to them. (Interview, 4/24).

In her own words, Margaret captured the importance of having the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues.

Katherine was inspired after participating in CLC to keep learning. Simply stated, she noted on her *Follow-up Questionnaire*:

After collaborating in the literacy cadre I have decided to go back to school to get my masters in reading. It has become apparent that many of my students struggles to read and I need to be able to provide them ways to navigate through difficult text. Talking about books like *Mosaic of Thought*, *Yellow Brick Road*, etc. allowed me to look at the research and figure out ways to help my students by knowing good teaching practices.

*(Follow-up Questionnaire)*

Katherine credits having the opportunity to collaborate, talk about professional texts, look at research, and know best practices as aiding her in figuring out how to help her students.

Katherine's comments early in the initiative suggested that she stood to gain much from collaborating with her colleagues each week. During her first interview, she shared the following in response to what she thought was working with CLC:

Well, it's sparking all my ideas for what I'm doing because I don't really know what I'm doing. I think that it's really giving me more of an understanding of what I do need to be doing in here, you know? I think it's nothing that after you leave every day on Thursday you should want to just come back to your classroom and want to get kids' heads in a book. You want them to read. You want to try things. I want them to infer. I

want them to go back and be active with the reading. I think it's just really sparking a lot of interest with me . . . but it's really taught me a lot about myself and what I need to do and maybe what I shouldn't be doing, I guess, but really just sparking an interest and getting it going for me. I just think it really gets my brain going with it's not even just in my English class, like even in my speech classes and my debate classes.

(Interview, 10/6)

Weekly collaboration ultimately sparked more than Katherine's interest and ideas. It resulted in taking her from a place of not "really knowing what I'm doing" to a place of confidence in her literacy teaching.

***Access to and support of a literacy coach.***

Participants valued having access to and the support of a literacy coach. Each utilized this resource in different ways. One-on-one time spent with me coaching was as different as each individual participant and it was driven by her unique needs. Mary Kate and Katherine acknowledged the importance of access to and support of me as their literacy coach near the end of the initiative. Margaret spoke about its importance earlier in the study.

As a first-year teacher who did not feel supported by her colleagues, it was no surprise that Katherine expressed appreciation for me as her caring and supportive coach. She included the following on her *Follow-up Questionnaire*:

By attending the sessions I had an outlet to get the help I needed and my questions answered by Kathy because I felt comfortable asking Kathy. I also was given the resources I needed when I needed it. The amount of

books that my students could use that were given to me by Kathy were amazing as well as instructional books to help me with several units. I was also able to go to conferences with the middle school teachers as well as see teachers around the area which helped me move forward in my teaching. I would not have made it my first year without Kathy.

Her comments also underscore the importance she placed on having access to appropriate resources and instructional materials as well as the opportunity to collaborate with the middle school teachers and engage in other professional experiences such conferences. Katherine's comment, "I would not have made it my first year without Kathy," suggests it is especially important for new teachers to have access to a coach or mentor.

Quite the opposite of a beginning teacher, Mary Kate also valued having access to and the support of me as her literacy coach, even as a seasoned veteran. She identified me, her literacy coach, as an important aspect of CLC during her last interview. Mary Kate expressed her appreciation and acknowledged the support she received when she stated, "It feels like we've been really selfish with you and your time like what else do you have, Kathy? What else can you give us and what else can you tell me and how else can you help me? I just appreciate it so much." (Interview, 4/24) It was interesting to have the opportunity to work with a 25+ year master teacher. It was even more exciting to watch a professional continue to learn and grow at this stage of her career. Even though Mary Kate shared that she appreciated me, I always felt like I learned as much, if not more, from her than she did from me.

As a mid-career professional, Margaret also expressed value in having access to and support of a literacy coach. Halfway through the year during my second interview,

Margaret attributed literacy coaching as being the solution to what she perceived to be one of her biggest barriers, making a district-adopted textbook work. As previously mentioned, Margaret was unhappy with use of the district's new literature series and made improving her literacy practices such that reading and writing instruction were more connected as a primary focus of her work within CLC. I asked Margaret to explain to me how the approach she was previously following for writing instruction fit with how she believed adolescents learned. She responded:

It doesn't. This isn't a textbook that I've ever taught out of before. It's new this year. So I was fumbling with it to begin with because we didn't have an inservice on it so nobody came down to show us how this is even supposed to work. It doesn't look like our old language book. Our old language book really did some neat things. It did the grammar and the writing part and then it turned around and did some activities that made the kids write. I think some of the things I got came out of that book. But I'm trying to use the new language book that the district bought us or purchased for all of use and I can't even make it work. Then you came along and did literacy coaching and opened up the possibility of doing this [referring to a workshop approach] and I'm so glad you did because it is working for us. (Interview, 1/24).

Margaret had been working throughout first semester to increase her knowledge about balanced literacy and implement a workshop approach. I supported Margaret as she slowly made a transition from a teacher-centered, basal approach to reading and writing instruction to a more student-centered, comprehensive balanced literacy approach that

included reader's and writer's workshop at a rate at which she was comfortable.

However, despite successfully implementing various pieces of the puzzle, Margaret felt guilty for not making the textbook “work” and continually looked to me for permission and reassurance that it was okay to change her instruction to do what she believed was right for her students. Not only was CLC about new ideas and practices, it created “the possibility of doing” what Margaret wanted to do, but just did not know how to go about doing herself, nor did she believe she was empowered to do so.

At other times during the year, Margaret again expressed appreciation for support she received from me as her literacy coach. In the following excerpt, Margaret provided her CLC cadre with an update on how the new practices she was working to implement in her classroom were going. She told everyone:

I thought that I was kind of hitting a nasty place and didn't know what direction I was going in. Everything that I had done had been great and stuff. And we did metaphors and we did schools as a metaphor and so I've got so many things - - - there are [referring to displays of school metaphors] just all over my room and I just can't get them out on the board and on the wall. But I appreciate my time with Kathy this morning. That kind of got me feeling better and now I know where I'm going to go and so I feel a lot better. I just need direction and once in awhile I go really fast and then I start slowing down and I don't know where I'm going.

(Cadre, 2/21).

Margaret expressed how change could be both challenging and overwhelming at times. She credited working with me as her literacy coach as helping her emotionally to

continue making change as well as to re-establish direction for her work to move forward. Having one-on-one time to work with a literacy coach was an important aspect of CLC for Margaret.

### **Assertion Two**

*Participants' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching were positively impacted by having access to a variety of professional learning resources, experiences, and instructional materials, the time to try new practices within the context of their own classrooms, the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on a regular and ongoing basis, and the support of a literacy coach.*

The purpose of research question two was to understand what aspects of CLC, if any, participants' perceived as important to the development of their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Multiple data sources were analyzed and reanalyzed. These sources included *Initial Questionnaires*, interview transcripts, CLC Cadre transcripts, and *Follow-up Questionnaires*. Four themes emerged from the participants' own words which allowed me to posit my second assertion. Participants identified resources, time, collaboration, and a literacy coach as important aspects of CLC that contributed to the development of their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the common themes that emerged from the three participants' words and to answer the questions that guided this research study. The three participants' words were captured from data, including but not limited to *Initial Questionnaires*, interview transcripts, CLC cadre transcripts and *Follow-up Questionnaires*. My study was concerned with two

questions. First, do middle and high school teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching change as a result of participation in a yearlong Collaborative Literacy Coaching initiative, and if so how? Second, what aspects of this yearlong Collaborative Literacy Coaching initiative contributed to middle and high school content teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching?

After analyzing and reanalyzing the data, the words of case study participants emerged as themes that led to my assertions for each of the two research questions. For the first research question, the emergent themes combined to suggest that the participants believed they were responsible for student learning, framed barriers as instructional problems, not student problems, perceived CLC as a tool to help solve instructional challenges, and engaged in the collaborative process to help realize teaching and learning successes. Their participation resulted in increased levels of confidence, which in turn reinforced their already positive general efficacy beliefs and enhanced their personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

The final section of this chapter addressed the second research question. The related emergent themes emerged from the participants' own words which allowed me to posit my second assertion. Participants identified the following areas of positive impact from the Collaborative Literacy Coaching initiative. They included:

- a) access to a variety of professional learning resources, experience, and materials,
- b) time and opportunity to try new practices within the context of their own classrooms, reflect on new learnings, and participate in ongoing collaborations, c)



opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on a regular and ongoing basis, and d) access to support of a Collaborative Literacy Coach.

In the next and final chapter of my dissertation, I draw conclusions, critique the study, and suggest implications for the field and future research.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion and Conclusions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Do middle and high school content teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy for literacy teaching change as a result of participation in a nine month Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) Initiative, and if so how?
2. What aspects of this nine month collaborative literacy coaching initiative contributed to middle and high school content teachers' personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching?

Multiple data sources were collected and then analyzed using constant-comparative method (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). I made the following assertions for each of the two research questions respectively based on my analysis and interpretation of the relationships between the themes that emerged from the participants' words:

*Assertion 1:* Participation in Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) positively changed participants' Personal Sense of Teacher Efficacy (PTE) beliefs for literacy teaching and reinforced existing positive General Sense of Teacher Efficacy (GTE) beliefs for literacy teaching. This was achieved because participants believed they were responsible for student learning, they framed student and teacher barriers as instructional challenges, not student problems, and they viewed CLC as a tool to help solve their problems and achieve student and teacher successes.

*Assertion 2:* Participants' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching were positively impacted by having access to a variety of professional learning resources,

experiences, and instructional materials, the time to try new practices within the context of their own classrooms, the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on a regular and ongoing basis, and the support of a literacy coach.

In this chapter, I discuss connections between the themes that emerged from the case study participants' words, the assertions I posited, and findings from earlier research. Additionally, I draw conclusions and note implications for future research on literacy coaching and teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy teaching.

### **Discussion of Assertion One**

Analysis and interpretation of multiple data sources led to assertion one regarding whether or not, and if so how, changes occurred with participants' general and personal sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. After analyzing the information provided by participants on the *Initial Questionnaire*, I determined that they already held positive general efficacy beliefs. I was able to determine this by first assigning a positive, negative, or neutral rating for personal and general sense of efficacy for literacy teaching based on the nature of each of the teachers' responses on the initial questionnaire. Then, I was able to enter an overall rating for each participant and for each category of efficacy beliefs (personal and general) on a chart. Finally, I was able to examine the chart to determine if participants were typical in their beliefs in comparison to the others. Each participant expressed that they believed that all teachers could and should impact students' learning through literacy instruction. For example, Mary Kate stated, "Teachers are in the business of education. And if students are not learning, are not reading, I believe that it is our job to do something about it." (*Initial Questionnaire*). Similarly, Margaret expressed, "I think teaching reading should be important to all teachers because

there is reading in all content areas.” (*Initial Questionnaire*). In addition, Margaret shared, “It is the teacher’s job to motivate students, build on what they know, offer support and help students to be successful.” (*Initial Questionnaire*). Likewise, Katherine believed teachers were responsible for students’ literacy learning. She stated the following in response to a question about the extent to which teachers can impact students’ literacy learning through literacy teaching despite challenges: “Teachers should teach what they need to teach and if a student needs help the teacher should help them.” (*Initial Questionnaire*). However, participants recognized that not all teachers, including some of their colleagues, embraced this same belief, but felt that lack of training contributed to such sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Participants also suggested that some teachers did not see teaching literacy as part of their role, because these teachers believed that they needed to spend class time covering their content.

I was also able to determine by analyzing the *Initial Questionnaire* that the participants expressed mixed degrees of personal sense of efficacy for literacy teaching. Although they stated that literacy teaching was important and all but one (Katherine) said they knew and already used some literacy strategies, overall, they felt that they lacked confidence in their ability to successfully implement literacy within their content area. Additionally, they all desired to learn new or additional ways to make a difference with their students through literacy teaching. Specifically, they were interested in finding ways to address unmotivated and struggling readers.

Upon further analysis and observation of the participants, I noticed that they willingly participated in CLC and embraced the role of a learner, among other existing roles and identities that shaped their experiences as they renegotiated their beliefs and

practices within the context of their own classrooms. When the multiple data sources were analyzed and reanalyzed, the data organized into themes that suggested that the participants believed they were responsible for student learning, framed barriers as instructional problems, not student problems, perceived CLC as a tool to help solve instructional challenges, and engaged in the collaborative process to help realize teaching and learning successes. Their participation resulted in increased levels of confidence, which in turn enhanced their personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

According to a literature review of teachers' beliefs about content literacy conducted by Hall (2005), inservice teachers believed that literacy teaching was important, but they felt that they were not qualified or questioned their ability to teach reading. Lack of confidence in literacy instruction historically has been identified by teachers as among their reasons for not using or teaching literacy strategies (Barry, 2002; Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009; Gee & Forester, 1988; Greenleaf, Schoenback, Cziko, & Mueller, 2001; Hall, 2005; Mallette, Henk, Waggoner, & DeLaney, 2005; O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995; Park & Osborne, 2007; Spor & Schneider, 1999). However, participants in the present study were not resistant or unwilling to incorporate literacy teaching. They self-reported that they believed literacy teaching was important and expressed a desire to learn strategies in order to become more confident in their abilities to help all students by participating in CLC.

Teacher efficacy is a construct of teacher beliefs. Specifically, it is the belief held by a teacher that he or she can positively impact student learning. This construct has been linked to numerous teacher and student behaviors (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Teacher efficacy is a prediction of productive teaching practices

such as use of praise versus use of criticism, perseverance with low achievers, focus on task, enthusiasm, and acceptance of student opinions (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). These behaviors and others positively impact student behaviors, which contribute to student achievement. Researchers have found that teachers who believe they can make a difference accept responsibility for both student success and failure (Kagan, 1992). Their efficacy beliefs determine the amount of effort they are willing to put forth with a particular teaching task, especially when faced with challenges, motivation issues, or instructional change efforts. (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). These research findings support the participants' willingness to accept personal responsibility for student learning and failures, to persist when faced with challenges, struggling learners, or set backs, and to maintain a strong commitment to making instructional changes that supported teacher and student successes. Furthermore, earlier research helps explain why participants in the present study reported positive GTE and negative PTE beliefs for literacy teaching. They believed literacy teaching could impact all students, it contributed to student successes, and that they were responsible for learning and using new practices if their existing ones were not impacting all learners.

In addition, more recent research found that teachers reported mixed levels of efficacy for literacy teaching (Cantrell et al., 2009). For example, the majority (64%) reported that they felt well equipped to teach content literacy strategies to most students, but 68% of them reported lacking confidence to address the needs of students reading below grade-level. The teachers, in the present study, reported seeing literacy instruction as part of their role, thought it important, and referred to specific strategies they learned as part of the Content Literacy Project (CLP). They believed that students should be

regularly engaged in literacy activities and taught specific literacy strategies.

Additionally, they identified comprehension of material and vocabulary building as the most important for students to be successful in their content areas.

Like the teachers in Cantrell et al. (2009) participants in the present study also reported they believed literacy teaching was important. They expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to impact all students and desired to learn additional strategies in order to make a difference. Teachers' sense of efficacy is considered the greatest predictor of teachers' willingness to make changes as part of professional development initiatives and has been linked to numerous positive teacher and student behaviors, including teachers' willingness to persist with low achievers and increases in student achievement (Guskey, 1988; Henson, 2001; Ross, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Given the strong research base for efficacy and teachers' willingness to make changes, it was not surprising to me that the participants in the present study who self-reported positive general teacher efficacy for literacy teaching willingly engaged in the CLC process, made instructional changes, and discussed both student and teacher successes that increased their confidence and contributed to an increase in their sense of personal teacher efficacy for literacy teaching.

In another study connected to the same professional development initiative previously discussed (Cantrell et al., 2009; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008), Cantrell and Callaway (2008) described the efficacy characteristics of high and low implementors of literacy teaching. They did not differentiate between PTE and GTE for literacy teaching. The researchers reported that both high and low implementers experienced barriers. However, they noted that the high implementers overcame the obstacles and successfully

implemented content literacy strategies. This finding is consistent with the present study. Participants faced a variety of barriers such as scheduling issues, lack of resources, and diverse learners, but they worked around them and were still successful implementing several new literacy practices into their subject areas.

A case study conducted by Takahashi (2011) allowed me to connect earlier research findings related to teacher efficacy previously mentioned to the themes that emerged from participants' words, create a framework for analyzing the themes, and ultimately craft the first assertion. The case study was conducted using a "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) approach to understand the relationship between teachers' evidence-based decision-making practices and their efficacy beliefs. Takahashi noted that a sociocultural framework was useful for her study because it "attends to learning that occurs in shared work activities among a community of practitioners" instead of "seeing the environmental context as outside of and separate from individuals" (p. 734). Additionally, she explained that a communities of practice approach "draws connections between shared practices, collective meaning-making, and identity, that allow for a conceptualization of how participation in shared activities may connect to teachers' efficacy beliefs" (p. 734). Takahashi argued that the collective practice of looking at student work was one way teachers developed their efficacy beliefs. More specifically, the researcher suggested that participants reified the process of collectively examining data as a tool for instructional improvement. Additionally, the process was infused with identities of teachers as responsible for student learning. Takahashi described how participants discussed students' work as a reflection of their teaching, not as student problems, and students' success as evidence of participants' teaching skills.



She noted earlier research (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004) that recognized that educators can identify student challenges and simultaneously have a strong sense of responsibility for student learning. Takahashi's explanation of the connection between teachers' experiences of evidence-based decision-making practice and their individual and collective efficacy beliefs allowed me to clearly make sense of and explain how the individual coded units of participants' words in my study clustered together to form the following themes: student barriers (SB), teacher barriers (TB), student successes (SS), and teacher successes (TS).

Like the teachers in Takahashi's study, the participants in the present study embodied identities of teachers as responsible for and capable of making a difference in student learning through their instructional practices. Additionally, the participants in the present study engaged in a collaborative practice that one could examine and then draw parallels to a communities of practice. Through the CLC, participants engaged in ongoing professional development in which they viewed the process as a tool for making instructional improvements that would enhance student learning. Throughout this process, participants' words illustrated that they knew what was necessary for student and teacher successes and although they described student and teacher barriers they were not placing blame, nor were they deterred by the barriers they identified. Instead, participants identified barriers as a way of expressing what needed to be addressed within CLC in order for their instruction to result in student achievement.

### **Discussion of Assertion Two**

According to research, teacher efficacy has been linked to coaching (Ross, 1992; Henson 2001; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Coaching often involves

identifying and sometimes changing a range of existing beliefs, including teacher efficacy beliefs, in order to support new practices. Recently, teacher efficacy has been linked to literacy coaching and implementation of content literacy (Cantrell & Callaway, 2008; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). However, not enough information is known about the relationship between literacy coaching and teachers' efficacy beliefs, particularly middle and high school teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. In research question two, I sought to understand which, if any, aspects of the CLC initiative contributed to middle and high school teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

### **Positive aspects of collaborative literacy coaching.**

Four themes emerged from my analysis and interpretation of multiple data sources that allowed for case study participants' to describe in their own words the impact that specific aspects of CLC had on their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. The emergent themes led me to assert that participants' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching were positively impacted. This occurred as a result of participants having access to the following: (a) a variety of professional learning resources, experiences, and instructional materials, (b) the time and opportunity to try new practices within the context of their own classrooms, reflect on new learnings, and participate in ongoing professional collaborations, (c) the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on a regular and ongoing basis, and (d) access to and the support of a literacy coach. I believe that the identified aspects of the CLC initiative contributed to increases in the participants' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. According to earlier research findings, coaching, collaboration, and opportunities to practice new literacy strategies were important to the development of teachers' efficacy beliefs (Cantrell et al., 2009; Cantrell

& Hughes, 2008). As a result, it makes sense that the identified themes contributed to the enhancement of the participants' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. In the next section, I discuss connections between the four themes that emerged from the data, the assertions I posited, and findings from earlier research. The four themes were coded and identified and as: (a) RESOURCES: Access to a variety of instructional materials, professional resources and other professional experiences, (b) TIME: Time and opportunity to try new practices within classroom contexts, reflect on new learnings, and participate in ongoing professional collaborations (c) COLLABORATION: Opportunity for regular and ongoing collaboration with colleagues, and (d) COACH: Access to and support from a literacy coach.

***Theme one: Access to a variety of instructional materials, professional resources and other professional experiences.***

Participants reported that receiving teaching materials and having access to professional resources and experiences such as videos, books, articles, and conferences were important aspects of CLC. They described using various resources with their students and in their classrooms as they tried new literacy practices. For example, participants described using children's literature and Young Adult trade books that they borrowed or received from the literacy coach to build text sets for students to use during theme-based units of study, perform read alouds intended to build background knowledge, or conduct comprehension strategy lessons. Previous research findings help explain why participants might have felt access to instructional materials and professional resources and experiences were important.

First, the International Reading Association's Commission on Adolescent Literacy stated that adolescents "deserve access to a wide variety of reading materials that they can and want to read" (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999, p. 4). This statement highlights the importance of using a range of texts when focusing on the development of adolescents' attitudes, interests, and motivations to read. Participants stated that their students were unmotivated to read and they wanted to learn ways to help them improve their attitudes about reading and increase their interest in reading for pleasure. This was achieved by providing participants with books that they could use in their classrooms to support this goal. Or, as Amy stated, "I was given the resources I needed when I needed it." (*Follow-up Questionnaire*, June).

In addition, providing all participants access to professional resources and experiences such as journal articles on topics of interest or the opportunity to view a video or visit another teacher's classroom in a nearby district supported their efforts to increase or build understanding of related literacy research, practices, and beliefs. For example, in addition to what participants learned about how text can support students' attitudes, interests, and motivations for reading, they learned about the role text plays within comprehension instruction by reading professional books, articles and attending conferences. Participants were introduced to the role text can play to build background knowledge or activate prior knowledge through the use of read alouds. They learned that both existence of background knowledge and activation of prior knowledge are important to comprehension (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Access to a range of professional reports, articles, and books such as the *RAND Reading Study Group* (2002) and *Mosaic of Thought* (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997) helped participants understand the contemporary

view of comprehension theory and specific ways text could be used to support comprehension strategy instruction. Guskey (1986) found that “extensive, varied, and ongoing” professional development is necessary in order for instructional strategies to succeed in teachers’ classrooms. Access to a wide range of professional development experiences not only provided new ideas and examples of literacy teaching practices that participants worked to implement into their classrooms, but their perceived success contributed to changes in efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

***Theme two: Time to try new practices within classroom context, reflect on new learnings, and participate in ongoing professional collaborations.***

Researchers recognize that time – time to learn, time to practice, time to refine, time to reflect, and time to collaborate with others as teachers work to implement new practices is important. Sturtevant, Boyd, Brozo, Hinchman, Moore, and Alvermann (2006) stated:

Our review of the school change record shows that admonitions such as ‘every teacher should be a teacher of reading’ will not lead to curricular changes in science, math, and history unless teachers (a) are adequately prepared in content area literacy strategies, (b) can directly observe the benefits of such strategies, (c) can support one another in their attempts to implement new literacy strategies, and (d) are able to reflect on and refine strategy instruction over time. Coaches lead teaching staff through these actions. (p. 144)

The *Reading Next* document identifies fifteen key elements of effective adolescent literacy programs (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). Included among them is professional

development that is “long term and ongoing” (p. 4). According to IRA (2006), some components of effective professional development identified by researchers (Darling-Hammond & McLaughline, 1995; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001) that are included in literacy coaching are:

- Grounded in inquiry and reflection;
- Participant-driven and collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among teachers within communities of practice;
- Sustained, ongoing, and intensive; and
- Connected to and derived from teachers’ ongoing work with their students (IRA, 2006, p. 3).

Other researchers noted that change in teacher practices requires professional development that allows new teaching techniques to be extensively modeled and demonstrated (Anders & Levine, 1990; Guskey, 1986). Additionally, Anders and Levine stated that teachers needed to have opportunities to experience, apply, and critique new practices. Marzano (2003) suggested that the process of learning and applying new practices occur within the context of specific content areas. Gusky’s (1986) research on professional development and transfer of new knowledge found that teachers needed extensive, varied, and ongoing opportunities in order for instructional strategies to succeed in their classrooms. Recent professional development efforts for secondary content teachers designed with many of these principles in mind, show promising results (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009). Cantrell and Hughes (2008) found that opportunities to practice and master literacy practices were important to support teachers’ sense of efficacy for literacy instruction.

Cantrell and colleagues (2009) found that teachers valued literacy instruction, saw themselves as both literacy and content teachers, and though they encountered barriers trying to implement new strategies, they felt that professional development with coaching and collaboration supported their teaching efficacy and implementation efforts. For example, teachers in this 2009 research study indicated that they learned and used new strategies, had become more intentional in their decision-making, were able to differentiate instruction (although they did not provide specific examples), shifted their thinking regarding their literacy role, created more literate environments, and felt students' performance improved as a result of strategy instruction.

Participants in the present study described similar successes as the teachers noted in Cantrell and her colleagues' study. For example, participants in the CLC initiative learned and incorporated several new strategies into their classes. Mary Kate described the power of using read alouds in her social studies classes to build background knowledge or for use with strategy instruction. Margaret completely changed her approach to spelling, writing, and reading instruction. She embraced a workshop approach for teaching reading and writing. In addition, she was amazed with students' results when she made the switch from having them memorize weekly spelling word lists to differentiating their instruction and using word sorts to teach spelling patterns. Katherine experienced a shift in her thinking about her literacy role. She shared:

Having been a teacher of an elective class, I now know the importance of reading instruction across the board. The more students are reading the better readers they will become. It is imperative for all teachers to make a difference to teach reading skills and read with all their students as much

as a regular English teacher. Teaching is more than teaching content. If a student is unable to read, then how will they be able to understand the vocabulary of a content? All content teachers have an opportunity to make a difference in teaching students skills and vocabulary necessary for understanding what it is that they are trying to teach them (their content).

*(Follow-up Questionnaire, June).*

Participants described a wide range of successes they experienced that can be attributed to increases in their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching and they identified time as one of several important aspects of CLC that supported their efficacy development. Time to learn, attempt, refine, and reflect on many new literacy practices as well as time to collaborate with colleagues is identified in earlier research as an important component of highly effective professional development, including coaching, and was supported in the present study as an important aspect of CLC as identified by the participants.

Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran and colleagues (1998) argued that teacher efficacy is context specific. They write, “teachers do not feel equally efficacious for all teaching situations” (p. 227). Mary Kate’s experience supports this finding that teachers’ sense of efficacy varies across different subject areas with certain students and various settings. As she stated, despite being a certified reading specialist, this did not mean she felt adequately prepared or believed she knew what or how to impact her seventh grade students through literacy teaching in her social studies classes. Participation in the CLC initiative supported Mary Kate’s belief in her “capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (p. 233). This was developed over time and supported by providing Mary Kate



and the other participants with the opportunity to practice new strategies within the context of their own classrooms and content areas, work with a coach, and collaborate with colleagues in order to reflect and refine new practices on an ongoing basis. Over time Mary Kate and the others renegotiated their identities as literacy teachers, which were strengthened by positive changes in their PTE for literacy teaching.

In addition, Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009) found that the process of influencing teachers' self-efficacy is complex and not straightforward. Their findings made clear that self-efficacy did not increase incrementally. Instead, teachers experienced what was referred to as a "dip" in efficacy, and the results demonstrated that self-efficacy and implementation of a new reading skill increased only in the context of the teachers' actual classrooms and with the support of a coach. Based on these findings it makes sense that participants in the present study expressed support for having time to practice new strategies within the context of their classrooms, reflect on new learnings, and participate in ongoing professional collaborations, including one with their literacy coach. Their efficacy development was not straightforward. Participants encountered student and teacher barriers along the way that impacted their literacy teaching implementation efforts. However, over time and with the support of a literacy coach they experienced positive changes which they described.

Participants in the present study were allowed to establish individual goals based on the needs of their students. A structure was provided that allowed participants to read, view, and share a variety of literacy practices and research before being given time to go back to their own classrooms to try them out with their own students and within their own content areas. Following the opportunity to try new practices, participants were provided

with time to share “How’s it going?” and to ask questions or learn more to support their efforts. Several participants mentioned that their students were aware that they were involved in some sort of professional development related to literacy and stated that their students asked, “Did you learn that in literacy class?” whenever they introduced a new practice. In addition to having students who were aware and interested in what the participants were learning, so too were their colleagues. During weekly CLC cadre, participants often reported that their colleagues expressed interest in what they were learning each week and often encouraged them to share their new ideas and practices during team and/or department meetings.

The CLC structure was designed to provide time for learning, practicing, collaborating, and reflecting on new and existing literacy practices as well as conversations around new and existing literacy-related beliefs. Reflective practice is associated with the work of Schön (1983) and was important in helping the researchers who developed the Reading Instruction Study (RIS) “understand that teachers’ implicit theories might affect behavior, and that those beliefs and theories can be modified to accept new and different research-based practices” (Anders & Richardson, 1994, p. 7). The CLC structure was influenced by the design of the professional development used within RIS. Both built in ongoing opportunities for reflection. In addition to time for reflection during weekly CLC cadre, participants were provided with journals in which to record and explore new and existing literacy-related knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Although participants did not use the provided journals nor were journal entries able to be used as part of data analysis as previously explained in Chapter Three, all used some method for journaling and reflecting in writing such as a computer log, spiral notebook,

or decorative notepad. Katherine mentioned her journal when she talked about how she knows her students are going to be successful. She said:

But I tell them that I have it in my journal. I keep a little log on my computer and every week I always ask them, ‘How can we be successful?’ (Interview, 4/20).

Not only did Katherine use reflection for her own benefit, she modeled this practice with her students for their benefit. Time for reflection was important for participants. As Mary Kate mentioned, time for reflection within CLC, “really made me think more about what I’m doing.” (Interview, 1/12). She stated that she loved “reflection time in our Tuesday classes” (Interview, 1/12) and described how it was important to her, because it allowed her the opportunity to consider new information in light of her existing practices and figure out how it might work within the context of her classroom.

A coaching cycle is commonly referred to as a coach and teacher engaging in an ongoing process of planning, observing or modeling, and debriefing/reflecting. I introduced CLC to participants by suggesting we follow a similar cycle only instead of using a ratio of one coach to one teacher, we would engage in this process collaboratively with a ratio of several teachers to one coach as a co-learner. I was surprised as the process took shape that participants did not want me to observe, model or provide feedback. Instead, they seemed to value more time to try new practices on their own and with limited to no modeling from me, but with more time to share and reflect collaboratively. They demonstrated that they were capable of working through new practices without the support of in-class coaching (Joyce & Showers, 1995). As participants took the lead and shaped CLC to meet their needs, I soon realized that

coaching could take many shapes and that it was not always necessary for the coaching cycle to include each step in order to fully support teachers. With this particular group of teachers it was more important to support their desire to have time to practice individually and reflect collaboratively than it was to make time to observe or model practices. This made me think about how many times as a coach I had been directed by an administrator or other supervisor to spend more time observing teachers or modeling strategies within their classrooms and made me question the value of those directives in light of my experiences with CLC.

***Theme three: Opportunity for regular and ongoing collaboration with colleagues.***

As suggested as part of the second theme, collaboration with colleagues was an important aspect of CLC. Participants not only valued extended time for collaboration during the school day that did not take place in the hallway in between classes, but they also spoke about the importance of having the opportunity for regular and ongoing collaboration with colleagues. Poole and Okeafor (1989) found that teachers with high general efficacy had higher implementation if they frequently collaborated with other teachers. It was determined by analyzing the *Initial Questionnaire* that participants in the present study all possessed strong general efficacy beliefs for literacy coaching prior to the start of CLC. Although participants self-reported on the same questionnaire that they believed all teachers could and should impact students' achievement through literacy teaching, my analysis showed they did not possess high/positive personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. However, participants successfully implemented several new literacy practices throughout the yearlong CLC and described positive increases in their

personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Participants in the present study expressed support for the opportunity to engage in regular and ongoing collaboration with their colleagues and described both implementation of new literacy practices and positive changes to their PTE beliefs for literacy teaching.

Several other prior studies identified collaboration and its relationship with teacher efficacy. Henson (2001) investigated the impact of teacher empowerment, collaboration, and perceptions of school climate on teacher efficacy. Results supported ongoing, collaborative professional development as a way to improve teacher efficacy, including those most resistant to change. Similar to Henson's findings, Cantrell and Hughes (2008) found that long-term professional development and opportunities for teacher collaboration positively impacted teacher efficacy for literacy learning. Takahashi (2011) used a socio-cultural framework to understand the relationship between teachers' evidence-based decision-making practices and their efficacy beliefs. She found that teachers co-constructed their efficacy beliefs in shared practices. According to Takahashi, the study findings highlighted the importance of context and its role in the development of efficacy beliefs. These findings are important to the present study as the participants engaged in collaborative conversations about their instructional practices, student work, and related knowledge and beliefs and identified opportunities for collaboration as an important component of CLC. Participation in CLC and ongoing collaboration with colleagues, literacy coach, and other professionals seemed to reinforce participants' GTE and changed their PTE beliefs for literacy teaching.

Opportunity for collaboration within the present study occurred at a minimum of once a week for four hours each week over the course of the school year. Attention was

paid to establishing an environment that respected all participants' experiences and varying levels of expertise in order to invite and foster sharing and collaboration. Stressing that more than one expert existed within each CLC cadre supported the notion that together we could solve any challenge we faced. This also created a shared sense of responsibility within the group. At the onset of the study, I informed participants that one of my goals was to focus on thinking, specifically to encourage individuals to become more reflective so that they developed the tools necessary to think through and solve their own problems once I was gone. As a result of encouraging and supporting collaboration, strong relationships among participants developed outside the time set aside for weekly CLC cadre. We talked on the phone, sent each other text messages and emails, and met for coffee, Diet Coke or dinner outside of CLC. Our conversations were a blend of both professional and personal matters. Because strong relationships grew out of ongoing opportunities for collaboration, participants felt safe to discuss real issues, share how teaching and learning really looked and how they were or were not working within their classrooms without fear of evaluation. All of this was a byproduct of ongoing collaboration with colleagues, which participants described as an important aspect of CLC.

This theme suggests it is important for teachers to have opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, literacy coaches, and other professionals. Administrators should work to create opportunities for collaboration within the school day and researchers should seek to learn more about the multiple layers of and positive impact associated with collaboration.

***Theme four: Access to and support from a literacy coach.***

According to Ross (1992), all teachers, regardless of their level of efficacy, benefited from contact with coaches. In a recent study, Cantrell and Hughes (2008) found coaching was important to teachers' efficacy development and implementation of literacy practices as did Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009). These findings are also consistent with research that showed coaching was linked to increases in teacher efficacy and provided support for teachers as they gained mastery experience with new techniques, the strongest source contributing to efficacy, according to Bandura (1997). As illustrated by these studies, a research-base, albeit small especially at the secondary level and in regards to efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching, exists that links coaching to efficacy beliefs. However, research also exists that points to challenges related to literacy coaching at the secondary level. Participants identified access to and support of a literacy coach as an important aspect of CLC. Attention to existing research related to challenges associated with secondary literacy coaching was paid in the design and delivery of CLC in order to ensure its success with participants.

Blamey and colleagues (2008/2009) conducted a survey to explore the roles, responsibilities and qualifications of middle and high school literacy coaches. The study found that despite *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches*, coaching roles and responsibilities at the secondary level were not clearly defined. The study also found that coaching at the secondary level is distinctly different from coaching at the elementary level. Like other researchers, Blamey and colleagues concluded middle and high school coaches spent very little time engaged in actual "coaching" activities as identified in the coaching standards. I served as the literacy coach in the present study. I clearly defined my role in the beginning of the study as participant observer (Gold, 1958

in Merriam, 2001). I explained that I would perform the role of researcher, the one who collected and analyzed the data, but I also explained that I would function as an active participant within the literacy cadre in my role as literacy coach. My “researcher’s observer activities” were known to the cadre members, but were “subordinate” to my “role as a participant” (p. 101). As the literacy coach I participated in activities, interacted with and formed relationships with the other cadre members, and worked to move the group and individuals forward as a coach operating as a leader among equals. Due to the nature and goal of the literacy cadre, I positioned myself as a collaborative partner and co-learner, rather than as an expert coach.

Issues of time (i.e., demands of standardized testing and lack of adequate time to work with teachers) that are part of a secondary culture that forever feels deprived of enough time to “cover” its curricular content, present very real barriers to successful coaching implementation efforts should they and other unique challenges at this level be ignored. According to Snow, Ippolito and Schwartz in the *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (IRA, 2006), coaching at the secondary level verses the elementary level included differences between (a) scope of the job, (b) teachers being coached, and (c) literacy needs of the students.

Snow, Ippolito, and Schwartz (IRA, 2006) noted that coaches at the secondary level face a variety of challenges. For example, the researchers noted that secondary coaches must work with a larger number of teachers across various content areas that view teaching content, not reading, as their primary goal. Specifically, “literacy coaches working in sixth grade and beyond are often dealing with larger numbers of teachers housed in several content area departments . . . coaches at the secondary level may



experience isolation from their colleagues, not feeling part of any one department and holding neither teacher nor administrative status” (pp. 41-42).

Additionally, secondary coaches are faced with a “wider skill range among students, a wider array of problems among the struggling readers and writers, and a generally lower level of motivation among adolescents” and have “fewer proven strategies to apply” (p. 42). Time constraints, unrealistic demands due to lack of intensive student interventions, resistant teachers, and the need to educate administrators and teachers about the need for differentiated instruction and appropriate student interventions for struggling readers added to the level of difficulty facing secondary coaches, according to the authors.

Furthermore, Moxley and Taylor (2006) in their book, *Literacy Coaching: A Handbook for School Leaders*, note similar challenges facing secondary coaches including the large number of teachers they are responsible for working with; the fact that secondary teachers have little training in reading; and that secondary coaches feel less welcome in teachers’ classrooms.

IRA’s *Standards for Reading Professionals* (2007) states:

*A reading coach or a literacy coach* is a reading specialist who focuses on providing professional development for teachers by providing them with the additional support needed to implement various instructional programs and practices . . . These individuals need to have experiences that enable them to provide effective professional development for the teachers in their schools. (p. 7)

Not only did I meet and exceed the *Standards for Reading Professionals* outlined by IRA (2007) that include being a reading specialist with previous teaching experience and a master's degree in reading education, I was no stranger to challenges coaches faced at the secondary level such as those related to time, student needs, and teacher skills, knowledge, and attitudes. I entered the present study having worked at the classroom, building and district levels as a teacher, reading specialist, literacy coach, coordinator and director responsible for designing, developing, and delivering a range of professional development initiatives that targeted both student and teacher literacy needs. It was with years of personal experience working with secondary students and teachers and after careful review of the professional literature that I approached the present study. The CLC was developed with my experiences and the literature in mind in order to avoid pitfalls related to coaching at the secondary level. Countless hours of personal and professional reflection over the years guided me in developing and delivering a model of literacy coaching that I believed could contribute to middle and high school teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

## **Conclusions**

I set out to understand if participation in a yearlong Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) initiative could impact middle and high school teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Participants reported positive general efficacy beliefs and low or negative personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching at the start of the study. By the end of nine-month's participation in CLC, they described positive changes to their personal efficacy beliefs. In addition, they identified several aspects of CLC that impacted their efficacy development.

Participants reported that they experienced increased confidence for literacy teaching. This is an indicator of change in their personal efficacy beliefs. Several factors contributed to increases in participants' confidence for literacy teaching and as a result a change in their efficacy development. For example, participants identified the importance of having the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues as a specific aspect of CLC that had an impact on them. By collaborating with colleagues and other professionals such as teachers in surrounding school districts, participants strengthened existing and developed new relationships. As a result of these relationships, participants had access to other thinking partners to help solve problems, generate new ideas, share resources, and more.

In addition, participants felt it was important to have adequate time to practice new strategies within the context of their own classrooms, reflect on new learnings, and engage in ongoing and regular collaborations with colleagues. Participants also described having access to instructional materials, professional resources, and a variety of professional experiences as having an impact. Finally, having access to and the support of a literacy coach was also noted by participants as making a difference.

In conclusion, participation in CLC can impact middle and high school teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Even when teachers express positive general efficacy beliefs and have a desire to make a difference personally, they may lack the confidence necessary to implement literacy teaching within their specific content areas, within the context of their particular classrooms, or with struggling learners. Regardless of a teacher's years of experience, certification area, level of education, or grade-level and subject area assignment, participants in the present study demonstrated that efficacy

beliefs can be positively developed by participating in ongoing, job-embedded professional development that includes attention to resources, time, collaboration, and literacy coaching. Teachers can learn literacy practices that are successful with struggling adolescents by having access to a variety of instructional materials, professional resources, and professional experiences related to this topic as well as by spending time trying new strategies within their classroom context, reflecting on their new learning and implementation efforts. In addition, when teachers have the time and opportunity for regular and ongoing collaboration with colleagues, and access to and support from a literacy coach, they can experience positive changes in their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Collaboration with colleagues within a context that valued all participants as co-learners who brought a variety of experiences and expertise to the group and allowed for conversations about literacy-related beliefs, knowledge, and practices within a safe environment, encouraged participants to achieve their individual goals and enhance their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching.

### **Implications for professional practice.**

My purpose for conducting this study was to explore whether or not middle and high school teachers' participation in a yearlong professional development initiative, Collaborative Coaching Initiative (CLC), designed and implemented by me would change their existing general and personal efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. In addition, I wanted to know which aspect(s), if any, of the initiative, the participants believed impacted their efficacy development. Even though participants believed that literacy instruction was important across all contents areas and that all teachers should and can impact student achievement through literacy instruction, they did not feel confident

enough in their own knowledge, skills, and existing practices to believe that they personally could make an impact in their particular subject areas on the literacy achievement of all students, especially with their most struggling learners. In addition, development of participants' personal sense of teacher efficacy for literacy teaching did not seem to be contingent on whether or not participants had several decades of teaching experience, no years of experience, or somewhere in between. It also did not seem to matter whether or not participants had a reading specialist certification or were teaching outside of their current area of certification. Regardless of experiences and certifications, the study results suggest that middle and high school teachers need ongoing professional development including the support of a coach in order to be and feel adequately prepared to successfully implement literacy teaching into their content areas.

According to Hall (2005), middle and high school teachers believe that literacy teaching is important. Results suggest that they are willing to learn and implement literacy practices. However, they believe that they are not adequately prepared to do so, especially with struggling readers. In addition, a content teacher's role is different from a reading teachers's or a reading specialist's. As a result, in order for content teachers to understand their unique role, it is important to provide professional learning opportunities that go beyond stressing the importance of implementing literacy strategies and changing teachers' beliefs and attitudes and show them how strategies instruction looks in their particular content areas. As noted by Hall (2005) and Moje (2008), teachers need to approach content literacy within the context of their specific subjects. The challenge is for teachers to help students develop the sophisticated skills needed to read texts specific to their content areas (Moje, 2008).

In addition, findings from Cantrell and her colleagues (2009) underscored the need for support for increasing content teachers' knowledge and skills for literacy instruction specific to their own content areas, paying attention to their beliefs about literacy instruction and their roles as content teachers, and providing additional professional development on ways to support students with particularly challenging literacy needs.

Since time is necessary for teachers to learn, practice, and refine new literacy practices as well as for their efficacy beliefs to develop and change, it is important to provide professional learning opportunities that are ongoing, job-embedded, and mindful of other aspects of successful efforts such as access to materials and resources, support of a literacy coach, allowance for collaboration with colleagues and other professionals. Richardson (1994a) noted if teacher beliefs are related to practices and have the power to impact the successful implementation of any change initiative, then beliefs, together with knowledge and practices, need to be included as part of the content of professional development efforts if they are to be successful. Mary Kate made the observation in her first interview that in over 30 years of teaching, she has never before had an opportunity like CLC. The opportunity for teachers to converse about their beliefs, teaching practices, and the change process became a key component of a "new form of staff development" incorporated within Richardson's and her colleagues Reading Instruction Study (RIS) (Richardson, 1994a). It also influenced the design of the collaborative coaching model in the present study. Professional development intended to assist middle and high school teachers with the successful implementation of literacy teaching and

enhance their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching must provide time, resources, collaboration, and literacy coaching.

In addition as noted by Mallette and colleagues (2005), teachers were receptive to the idea of everyone as a teacher of literacy. However, their beliefs about students' multiple literacies pointed to a new form of resistance. According to survey results, teachers resisted recognizing or incorporating students' out-of-school literacies in their instruction and viewed students' multiple literacies as "habits in need of repair" (p. 40). Hagood, Provost, Skinner, and Egelson (2008), like Mallette and colleagues (2005), found that teachers viewed literacy in a traditional manner. Although teachers expressed excitement about new literacies strategies, they had trouble implementing them into their instruction. Participants in the present study welcomed a broad definition of literacy and worked to incorporate new technologies and literacy practices such as blogging into their classes. Time to adequately do so, not attitudes or willingness, presented itself as a barrier to full implementation. Access to technologies or adequate technologies in some school settings might also present obstacles to implementation. Research in this area has implications for professional development efforts. It is not enough to inform educators of the value and importance of broadly defining adolescent literacy and literacy tasks or to encourage them to incorporate literacy defined by 21<sup>st</sup> century standards (Mallette et al., 2005). Professional development opportunities must be created that provide teachers with the support and tools they need to increase their knowledge, confidence, and overcome barriers to implementation as they experiment with new literacies within their disciplines.

**Direction for research.**

The promise of coaching and its popularity spread across the country and school districts faster than the evidence-base for it did. Research on the impact of literacy coaching is in its infancy. Moreover, the majority of the early research was, as Toll observed, “either descriptive or evaluative of particular literacy coaching programs” or accounts of literacy coaches’ roles and responsibilities (Toll, 2009, p. 66). The emphasis was on descriptions of coaching – what it was, what coaches did and how they spent their time. Before its effectiveness could properly be evaluated, its titles, roles, and responsibilities needed to be clarified. Early descriptive studies, including program and district-wide evaluations, did not assess the impact of coaching on student achievement or instruction. Additionally, early studies that did investigate its impact did not examine differences within literacy coaching; rather they treated coaching as the same across all professional development efforts, or, the research designs did not separate the effects of coaching from other professional development components. For example, Fisher, Frey, Lapp, and Flood (2004) reported positive changes as the result of a school-wide, high school literacy initiative that included coaching teachers. However, too many variables were involved to know if coaching made the difference in student achievement. The sum of early research on literacy coaching did not produce a definitive demonstration of its effectiveness on student achievement, the hope of its use and large-scale implementation. In order to accomplish this, much more research was needed.

Of promise are recent studies that examined the impact of coaching on teachers’ practices and student achievement. It is important to know what specifically coaches should do as well as how much and for how long in order to make desired student changes. Several recent studies have considered the impact of specific strategies coaches



use with teachers (Bean et al., 2010; Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2010; Walpole et al., 2010). In addition, recent studies have examined the impact of coaching on teachers’ practices and student achievement that also included intensive training for coaches and well defined coaching models. Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter (2010) looked at the impact of the Literacy Collaborative (LC), a reform model, and its use of coaching to increase the literacy learning of students in grades K-2. It is important for researchers to continue to study and identify specific literacy coaching models that are successful in order to eliminate confusion between well-meaning coaching programs and actual coaching models that are supported by a clearly defined research-base and underlying theories and concepts that enable them to be classified as models (Toll, 2009). A firm understanding of different literacy coaching models and their impact on teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, and practices and student achievement will allow the field to understand the impact of literacy coaching separate from other forms of professional development.

Researchers such as Neuman and Wright (2010) have made early contributions to this line of research. In addition, recent research includes studies conducted at various grade levels that investigated the impact of literacy coaching on teachers’ practices and student achievement and involved well developed models and/or adequate training for coaches (Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & DiPrima Bickel, 2010; Lovett et al., 2008; Sailors & Price, 2010). Continued research along this line will allow the field to confirm that coaching is responsible for student gains. In addition, continued research along this line at the secondary level is particularly important, since researchers have acknowledged that coaching at this level is distinctly different from coaching at the elementary level (Blamey et al., 2008/2009).

Participants in the present study identified several aspects of CLC that they perceived to be important in the development of their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Having access to and the support of a literacy coach were among the aspects identified that they felt were important. Prior research has identified coaching as an important component of professional development models that contributed to the development of teachers' efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching of middle and high school teachers (Cantrell et al., 2009; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). Not only is it important for researchers to continue to clearly define the components of and underlying theories and concepts that support effective models of literacy coaching used with middle and high school teachers, but they also need to investigate specifically which strategies coaches are using with middle and high school teachers in order to positively impact their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. Now that we know teachers perceive literacy coaching as important one might ask, "What are specific skills and strategies literacy coaches use with middle and high school teachers in order to develop their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching?" In addition, it is important to know how many and for how long should these specific skills and strategies be used in order to have an impact on teachers' efficacy beliefs?

### **Limitations.**

As with all research there were limitations to my study. First, my study was limited by the number of participants (three). Due to the small number of participants and to the fact that all three were Midwestern, Caucasian, females teaching in a small, rural public school district, it should be noted that neither they nor their experiences may be representative of a larger and more varied sample. Therefore,

the sample size, selected participants, and context for the study were not large or diverse enough to make generalizations from this multiple case study beyond the individual cases described in this study to other cases. Additionally, the use of questionnaires as one of my main data sources may be perceived as problematic in that the responses collected were self-reported and are only as reliable as the honesty, accuracy, and memory of the respondents. Finally, my role as researcher-participant in this study may raise concern regarding bias, despite every effort to remain objective. My close involvement in designing, delivering, participating and researching the collaborative literacy coaching initiative provided me with the opportunity to be fully immersed in the study, but also may have prevented me from clearly and objectively coding, analyzing and interpreting the findings.

### **Concluding thoughts.**

As literacy demands for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning continue to increase in complexity, student demographics change, and the range of learners' needs within the classroom become more diverse, it is important to provide teachers with adequate supports to address these challenges. Researchers and educators agree upon the importance of providing literacy instruction within all content areas. Teachers have expressed a willingness to support literacy teaching, but do not feel adequately equipped to do so. They must be provided professional learning opportunities that show them how to implement literacy teaching into their content areas. Professional development initiatives must take into account teacher beliefs, knowledge, and practices, including their efficacy beliefs for literacy teaching. If teachers are to successfully implement literacy teaching into their content areas, they must believe that they can make a difference in student

achievement for this particular task within the specific context of their classroom and subject areas.

Literacy coaching embraces the components of effective professional development. The body of evidence for literacy coaching and its impact on student achievement is growing. In addition, efficacy beliefs have been linked to increases in student achievement as well as to coaching. It is important to continue with this line of research in order to fully understand the connections between the two. Because research on literacy coaching is in its infancy and so little is known about how teachers' efficacy develops, particularly in the area of literacy teaching of middle and high school teachers, more must be uncovered in order to understand how both might assist in the achievement of adolescent learners.

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## Appendix A

### Participant Selection Information

**Appendix A**  
*Participant Selection Information*

Teacher	Gender	Level of Education	Teaching Certification	Years Teaching Experience			Current Teaching Assignment			Initial Efficacy Rating (POS, NEG, NEQ)	Initial Library Practices Observed	Study Consent Granted	Principal Approval Granted
Gender	M/F	BA/BS MA/MS	Area/Level of Endorsement	1-4	5-10	10-35	Building	Content Area	Grade Level	GTE	PTE	Yes/No	Yes/No
Dorothy	F	BS	K-9 Elem, K-12 PE			29	OMIS	Social Studies	7	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes
Mary Kate	F	MS	K-9 Elem, Rde Spec			25+	OMIS	Social Studies	7	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes
Margaret	F	BA + 8	K-9 Elem		8		OMIS	Core Contents	6	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes
Rosemary	F	MS	K-9 Elem, SPED, K-12 Library			25	OMIS	Library	6-8	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes
John	M	BS	K-9 Elem			22	OMIS	Social Studies	7	POS	NEG	No	Yes
Patrick	M	BA	K-9 Elem			3	OMIS	ELA	8	POS	NEG	No	Yes
Mula	F	BS	K-9 Elem			14	OMIS	ELA	6	POS	NEG	No	Yes
David	M	BS	K-9 Elem, Early Child		8		OMIS	Business & Technology	6-8	POS	NEG	No	Yes
Katherine	F	BS	Speech/Drama	1			OMIS	ELA, Speech, Debate, Drama	9-12	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes
Elizabeth	F	MS	7-12 English, Speech	7			OMIS	ELA	9-12	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes
Susie	F	MS	7-12 English, K-12 Library			26	OMIS	ELA	12	POS	NEG	No	Yes
Patricia	F	BA	7-12 English, Spanish	4			OMIS	ELA	11-12	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes
Teresa	F	MA	7-12 English, Speech			31	OMIS	ELA	11-12	POS	NEG	No	Yes
Judy	F	BA +	7-12 English	5			OMIS	ELA, Journalism	9-12	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes
Michael	M	MA	7-12 English	2			OMIS	ELA	9	POS	NEG	No	Yes
Matthew	M	BA	7-12 English	2			OMIS	ELA	9-10	POS	NEG	Yes	Yes

*Dropped out of the CLC Initiative  
Selected as Case Study Participant*

## Appendix B

### Teacher Information Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Room Number: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Schedule:

Please note planning period, start/end time for each class, room number for each class, and class name for each period. Also indicate if/how your schedule changes 2<sup>nd</sup> semester.

Highest degree earned to date:

Years of experience as a teacher:

Area(s) of certification:

Grade level(s) & content area(s) you have taught:

Grade level(s) & content area(s) you are currently teaching:

Have you taken any reading/literacy courses?

Please list course name(s), when you took the course(s), and where you took the course(s):

Have you participated in any reading/literacy professional development within the last 1-2 years? If so, when, where, and what was the topic and mode of the professional development?

Have you read any professional books that address reading/literacy, adolescent literacy, content reading, or other related topics in the last several years? If so, list titles, authors, and topics as best as you can recall.

Do you plan to participate in the after-school study group?

Do you anticipate any conflicts with the study group dates such as specific times/dates when you will be unable to attend? Please explain.

How would you respond to the quote, "Every teacher is a teacher of reading?" Do you agree/disagree with this statement? Explain.

Why, if at all, do you believe the above quote's call for help from content area teachers has fallen on deaf ears? Explain.

What do you hope to learn/gain as a result of participating in this Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) initiative?

Is there anything you would like to share with me about yourself, learning style, or particular needs that may relate to our work together?

## **Appendix C**

### **Participant Letter and Consent Form**

TO: Participants  
FR: Kathy Schmiedeler, University of Kansas  
RE: The Impact of Literacy Coaching on Secondary Content Area Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Study

During the upcoming school year, I am conducting a research study in your district. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of an inquiry-based collaborative coaching and learning professional development initiative on teachers' literacy beliefs and practices in a rural secondary setting. In particular, I am studying what changes, if any, related to teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning and teachers' literacy instructional practices can be attributed, at least in part, to this professional development process.

I am interested in exploring the impact this coaching initiative has by looking at it through your lens. Your principal and other district personnel are also interested in this study, because they want to learn if this coaching initiative is beneficial for teachers and a good use of time and resources. Members of the reading and education communities are interested in this study, because it will contribute information about coaching, a popular and growing literacy intervention choice for which there is a need for more research.

I want to conduct this study for numerous reasons. Like your principal and other district personnel, I, too, want to know if this coaching initiative is beneficial. I also want to make a contribution in a greatly needed area of research, literacy coaching, as well as use information from this study in my dissertation research. Finally, as a teacher, learner, and literacy coach, I am excited about the opportunity to work as a researcher-participant in a collaborative teaching and learning professional development process in which I can learn alongside you more about adolescent learners and literacy.

I hope you will choose to participate in this study. It should prove to be an exciting and worthwhile journey. However, before you decide whether or not to participate, I want to share additional information about the study with you.

The Department of Teaching and Leadership at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. If you agree to participate, please know that you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Your decision to not participate will not affect your relationship with personnel in your district, school or the University of Kansas.

If you decide to be a part of this study, I will ask you to participate in or complete the following:

1. Three questionnaires administered periodically over the next eight months (first part of September, first part of January, and end of April) that inquire about your existing/current literacy beliefs and practices;
2. Three in-classroom observations teaching a content-literacy lesson of your choice during the next eight months (first part of September, first part of January, and end of April).
3. Willingness to share documents related to the three observed literacy lessons (i.e. lesson plans, student handouts, overhead transparencies, etc.).
4. Three face-to-face interviews approximately one hour in length following each of the three observed literacy lessons.
5. Participation in and willingness to have weekly coaching meetings audio-recorded;
6. Participation in and willingness to have bi-monthly study group meetings audio-recorded;
7. Willingness to keep and share with me for analysis a reflective participant's journal in which you record regularly (i.e. once a week) your thinking and learning connected to the coaching process and your literacy beliefs and practices.

As the researcher-participant, I will conduct all of the interviews and observations. I will audio-record and transcribe the interviews, weekly coaching meetings, and bi-monthly study group meetings so that I can reread your comments and accurately understand your views. The transcripts will also help me identify themes and patterns in teachers' comments.

A transcriptionist may be hired who is not affiliated with Ottawa School District or the University of Kansas to help me with transcribing the audio-recordings. However, your true identity will remain anonymous to everyone except me. Pseudonyms or code numbers for participants will be used. Additionally, after the tapes have been transcribed and coded, the tapes will be destroyed to prevent others from gaining access to them.

Although it is not likely, there is a chance that you might feel uncomfortable with some interview questions, being audio-recorded, or during some other point in the research process. Please know that if you should feel uncomfortable for any reason at any point in the study, you can talk to me about your concerns, request that I stop recording, or you can even withdraw from the study completely.

Thank you for taking time to read this information and for considering participation in this study. I believe our joint efforts will prove worthwhile to others interested in learning more about adolescent literacy, literacy coaching, and content area teachers' literacy beliefs and practices.

If you would like additional information about this study before, during, or after it is completed, feel free to contact me by phone or email. If you agree to participate and sign below, I will provide you with a copy of this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

---

Kathy Schmiedeler  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Kansas  
913-744-1838  
2510 West 51<sup>st</sup> Street  
Westwood, Kansas 66205  
kschmiedeler@hotmail.com

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Dr. Arlene Barry, Ph.D.  
Faculty Supervisor  
Teaching & Leadership Department  
JRP Hall, Room 227  
1122 West Campus Road  
Lawrence, Kansas 66045  
abarry@ku.edu

---

Consent to Participate and be Quoted

**PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:**

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email dhann@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form. Having read and understood the above information, I hereby grant written permission to participate in the research study. I understand that in all written accounts of my comments during interviews, observations, meetings, etc., you will use a pseudonym rather than my real name. I also understand that use of the tape recordings will be restricted to the researcher and the transcriptionist.

---

Print/Type Participant's Name

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

## Appendix D

### *Initial Questionnaire*

**Directions:** Read each of the below statements/questions. Respond as honestly and completely as possible. Please type your responses directly onto this form using a different font and/or different color of text. Use as much space as needed for each response. Do not worry about providing “right” or “wrong” answers, as I am not interested in “grading” your responses. Rather, I am seeking to understand your beliefs as well as to gain insight into your classroom. When completed, email the form back to me as an attachment.

1. To what extent do you believe you can impact students’ learning through literacy teaching despite challenges such as low skills, lack of motivation, home environment variables, etc.? Describe.
2. To what extent do you believe that teachers, in general, can impact students’ learning through literacy teaching despite challenges such as low skills, lack of motivation, home environment variables, etc.? Describe.
3. I know how to use a variety of content literacy teaching strategies effectively. Agree or disagree? Explain and/or describe.
4. If students struggle with reading, I can do something about it. Agree or disagree? Explain.
5. Teachers should not be blamed for students’ low reading achievement. Agree or disagree? Explain.
6. Explain why you think teaching literacy is or is not an important role of all teachers, regardless of the content area they teach.
7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Poor ability to comprehend and lack of motivation for reading are no match for good teaching. Explain.
8. Who do you believe matters most when it comes to impacting reading achievement---you or your students? Why?
9. Approximately what percent of your students read at each of the following levels:
  - % on grade level
  - % below grade level
  - % above grade level
10. Approximately what percent of your students have you observed having difficulty in decoding, (figuring out how to pronounce a word)?



11. Approximately what percent of your students are able to read and write adequately, but seem to be weak in higher-order areas such as interpreting and applying, or “reading between the lines”?
12. Approximately what percent of class time do your students spend on worksheets/study guide-type assignments?
13. Approximately what percent of class time do your students spend writing?
14. Approximately what percent of class time do your students spend reading?
15. How often do you use supplementary reading materials related to course content (i.e., non-textbook reading materials from newspapers, magazines, other books, etc.)?
16. Besides assigning reading, how else do you promote reading, either leisure or academic, in your classroom?
17. Content teachers at middle and high schools need to concentrate instructional time on content, not on reading instruction. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
18. Middle/High school teachers need to integrate reading/thinking strategies into instruction. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
19. Students who enter middle or high school need to be able to read and understand middle or high school textbooks. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
20. Students learn to read in elementary school. They apply those skills in middle and high school. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
21. Middle/High school teachers serve as reading role models? Agree? Disagree? Comment.
22. Middle/High students pay attention to teachers’ behaviors and attitudes regarding reading. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
23. Reading is making sense of text. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
24. Middle/High school students can profit from hearing adults read aloud. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
25. Middle/High school teachers can help students learn to access information from texts. Agree? Disagree? Comment.

26. Good readers are active readers engaged in strategy use before, during, and after reading. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
27. Before I can expect a student to learn anything, I need to establish rapport. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
28. Briefly describe any ways in which you collect information about students' reading levels or abilities (formally or informally).
29. What is the role of texts in content reading instruction? What types should be used?
30. What instructional materials (textbooks, trade books, other) do you use in your classes? Please note the frequency with which you use each and identify how texts/instructional materials are chosen.
31. Identify as many reading strategies with which you are familiar. Please indicate which ones you use/teach your students to use and which ones you know in name only.
32. Describe how you teach reading in your content area.
33. How do you define comprehension?
34. How do you teach comprehension?
35. How do middle or high school students learn to read?
36. How is literacy instruction different from teaching another content such as science, social studies, writing, etc.?
37. Identify different instructional groupings (i.e., whole, small, partners/pairs, individual/independent) that you use within your class and indicate the frequency of each (i.e. daily, weekly, several times a month, at least once a month, infrequently). How do you form small groups and partners/pairs?
38. Describe a student who struggles to read.
39. Describe a student who reads well.
40. Identify elements of an ideal classroom. Explain.
41. What are the sights and sounds of the classroom described above?
42. What is the role of the teacher in this classroom (see #40)?
43. What is the role of the students in this classroom (see #40)?

44. What is the curriculum of this classroom (see #40) and how does it relate to student learning?

## Appendix E

### Human Subjects Consent Form #15393

## The University of Kansas

Office of the Vice Provost for Research  
Contract Negotiations and Research Compliance

8/23/2005  
HSCL #15393

Kathy Schmiedeler  
2510 W. 21st St.  
Westwood, KS 66205

The Human Subjects Committee, Lawrence Campus (HSCL) has received your response to its expedited review of your research project.

15393 - Schmiedeler/Barry (I & L) The Impact of Literacy Coaching on Secondary Content Area Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

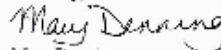
and approved this project under the expedited procedure provided in section III E.3 (c) of KU's Assurance Policies, 45 CFR 46.110 (f) (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

The Office for Human Research Protections requires that your consent form must include the note of HSCL approval and expiration date, which has been entered on the consent form(s) sent back to you with this approval.

1. At designated intervals until the project is completed, a Project Status Report must be returned to the HSCL office.
2. Any significant change in the experimental procedure as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
3. Notify HSCL about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at <http://www.research.ku.edu/tutor/hsp/index.shtml>.
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported to the Committee immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity. If you use a signed consent form, provide a copy of the consent form to subjects at the time of consent.
6. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.

Please inform HSCL when this project is terminated. You must also provide HSCL with an annual status report to maintain HSCL approval. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date. If your project receives funding which requests an annual update approval, you must request this from HSCL one month prior to the annual update. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Mary Deming  
Associate Coordinator  
Human Subjects Committee, Lawrence

cc: Arlene Barry

Youngberg Hall • 2385 Irving Hill Road • Lawrence, KS 66045 7563 • (785) 864-7451 • Fax: (785) 864-5049  
[www.research.ku.edu](http://www.research.ku.edu)

## Appendix F

### *Follow-up Questionnaire*

**Directions:** Read each of the below statements/questions. Respond as honestly and completely as possible. Please type your responses directly onto this form using a different font and/or different color of text. Use as much space as needed for each response. Do not worry about providing “right” or “wrong” answers, as I am not interested in “grading” your responses. Rather, I am interested in understanding your beliefs, your classroom, and your experience with the Collaborative Literacy Coaching (CLC) initiative from your perspective. When completed, email the form back to me as an attachment.

1. To what extent do you believe you can impact students’ learning through literacy teaching despite challenges such as low skills, lack of motivation, home environment variables, etc.? Describe.
2. To what extent do you believe that teachers, in general, can impact students’ learning through literacy teaching despite challenges such as low skills, lack of motivation, home environment variables, etc.? Describe.
3. What would you say to someone who says, “There’s really nothing teachers can do to improve some students’ ability to comprehend difficult text.”
4. Who do you believe matters most when it comes to impacting a student’s ability to comprehend difficult content area text --- the teacher or the student? Why?
5. Describe how participation in the CLC initiative did or did not help you incorporate literacy instruction into your classes?
6. How would you respond to the following statement: I have the ability to impact student learning/achievement through literacy teaching, despite any barriers.
7. How would you respond to the following statement: Teachers have the ability to impact student learning/achievement, despite any barriers.
8. What challenges or barriers, if any, did you face during the course of the CLC initiative? Describe. How did you handle them?
9. Describe how, if at all, participation in the CLC initiative impacted your ability to support student learning?
10. Describe how, if at all, participation in the CLC initiative impacted your classroom/teaching?

11. What aspects of the CLC initiative, if any, had the greatest impact and/or were most helpful? Why?
12. Approximately what percent of your students read at each of the following levels:
  - % on grade level
  - % below grade level
  - % above grade level
13. Approximately what percent of your students have you observed having difficulty in decoding, (figuring out how to pronounce a word)?
14. Approximately what percent of your students are able to read and write adequately, but seem to be weak in higher-order areas such as interpreting and applying, or “reading between the lines”?
15. Approximately what percent of class time do your students spend on worksheet/study guide-type assignments?
16. Approximately what percent of class time do your students spend writing?
17. Approximately what percent of class time do your students spend reading?
18. How often do you use supplementary reading materials related to course content (i.e., non-textbook reading materials from newspapers, magazines, other books, etc.)?
19. Besides assigning reading, how else do you promote reading, either leisure or academic, in your classroom?
20. Content teachers at middle and high schools need to concentrate instructional time on content, not on reading instruction. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
21. Middle/High school teachers need to integrate reading/thinking strategies into instruction. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
22. Students who enter middle or high school need to be able to read and understand middle or high school textbooks. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
23. Students learn to read in elementary school. They apply those skills in middle and high school. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
24. Middle/High school teachers serve as reading role models? Agree? Disagree? Comment.

25. Middle/High school students pay attention to teachers' behaviors and attitudes regarding reading. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
26. Reading is making sense of text. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
27. Middle/High school students can profit from hearing adults read aloud. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
28. Teachers can help students learn to access information from texts. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
29. Good readers are active readers engaged in strategy use before, during, and after reading. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
30. Before I can expect a student to learn anything, I need to establish rapport. Agree? Disagree? Comment.
31. Briefly describe any ways in which you collect information about students' reading levels or abilities (formally or informally).
32. What is the role of texts in content reading instruction? What types should be used?
33. What instructional materials (textbooks, trade books, other) do you use in your classes? Please note the frequency with which you use each and identify how texts/instructional materials are chosen.
34. Identify as many reading strategies with which you are familiar. Please indicate which ones you use/teach your students to use and which ones you know in name only.
35. Describe how you teach reading in your content area.
36. How do you define comprehension?
37. How do you teach comprehension?
38. How do middle or high school students learn to read?
39. How is literacy instruction different from teaching another content such as science, social studies, writing, etc.?
40. Identify different instructional groupings (i.e., whole, small, partners/pairs, individual/independent) that you use within your class and indicate the frequency of each (i.e. daily, weekly, several times a month, at least once a month, infrequently). How do you form small groups and partners/pairs?

41. Describe a student who struggles to read.
42. Describe a student who reads well.
43. Identify elements of an ideal classroom. Explain.
44. What are the sights and sounds of the classroom described above?
45. What is the role of the teacher in this classroom (see #43)?
46. What is the role of the students in this classroom (see #43)?
47. What is the curriculum of this classroom (see #43) and how does it relate to student learning?



## Appendix G

### Partial List of Professional Texts, Articles, and Resources Provided to Participants

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## **Appendix H**

### **Sample Weekly Middle School Cadre Agenda**

Rural Middle School  
Collaborative Literacy Coaching Cadre  
Week 4

P.M. Group  
11:40 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.

#### **Today's Goals:**

1. Read, discuss, and share ideas related to our question about how to tailor the fit between what students can read and what we want them to read.
2. Dig deeper into issues connected to our question.
3. Plan for classroom demonstration of related strategies and/or plan for further study/sharing of related issues/strategies.

#### **Agenda**

##### **Read Aloud**

*What Can I Do?* By: Lee Ann Spillane (teacher)

##### **Inquiry**

Book in a Day Strategy (see next page)

Wutz, J. A., & Wedwick, L. (2005). Bookmatch: Scaffolding book selection for independent reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(1), 16-32.

Questions to consider:

- What do we do to know our kids, know books, and connect the two?
- In what ways do adolescents lead literate lives beyond reading what is assigned in school? Or, how do they exhibit multiple literacies?
- How might we bridge the gap between what kids can read and what we want them to read?
- What do you think are the reasons why so many students are unable to read what we want them to read?

##### **Demonstration**

*Knowing the Kids* – Interest Inventories

*Knowing the Books* – Book Pass

*Making the Match* – Read Alouds

##### **Reflection & Planning**

- Next Steps??? Expert Groups???



### **Book in a Day Strategy**

(Allen, 2004 adapted from Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, & Roy, 1984)

1. Divide the assigned article, chapter, or book into equal reading segments between the members of your group.
2. Each group member reads his/her segment and completes the following three tasks:
  - Summarize the important points in the reading;
  - Draw a visual that represents something significant from the reading; and
  - Develop questions that need answers in order to fully understand the reading.
3. Have each group member present the above tasks in chronological order, and as each small group member presents their summary, supported by their visual, and asks questions, the other group members answer the questions.

## **Appendix I**

### **Sample Weekly High School Cadre Agenda**

Rural High School  
Collaborative Literacy Coaching Cadre  
Week 4

A.M. Group  
7:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

#### **Today's Goals:**

1. Continue study of student and teacher questioning in order to enhance classroom discussions of texts.
2. Explore issues and strategies related to student and teacher questioning.
3. Plan for classroom demonstration related to our study of student and teacher questioning.

#### **Agenda**

##### **Read Aloud**

Excerpt from Janet Allen's *Yellow Brick Roads* (YBR) (pgs. 130-132)

##### **Inquiry**

Questions to consider/discuss:

- What do teachers hope to accomplish through use of student questioning?
- In what ways can teachers achieve their goals?
- How might our classrooms and instruction look different if we no longer assigned chapters to read and then asked students to answer questions about what they read?
- How do you feel about taking additional time to build background knowledge at the potential expense of "covering" less material?

Read *YBR* pgs. 132-137

##### **Demonstration**

- Teaching four types of questions (memory, convergent thinking, divergent thinking, & evaluative)
- Discussion question cards

##### **Reflection & Planning**

- Next Steps for classroom visit 9/27

## Appendix J

### Timeline for Data Collection

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Collection Timeframe</b>	<b>Collection Frequency</b>	<b>Data Analysis Source</b>
Teacher Background & Demographic Information Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August</li> </ul>	1 time	Secondary
Initial Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August/September</li> </ul>	1 time	Primary
Follow-Up Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May/June</li> </ul>	1 time	Primary
Weekly CLC Cadres (Audio-Recordings & Transcripts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August - May</li> </ul>	Weekly per cadre	Primary
Interviews (Audio-Recordings & Transcripts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>September/October</li> <li>January</li> <li>April/May</li> </ul>	3 times	Primary
Classroom Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>September/October</li> <li>January</li> <li>April/May</li> </ul>	3 times	Secondary
Optional After-School Study Group (Audio-Recordings & Transcripts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>September - May</li> </ul>	Monthly	Secondary
Optional Extended PD Opportunities (Audio-Recordings & Transcripts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>November - April</li> </ul>	Varied	Secondary
Optional 1-on-1 Literacy Coaching (Audio-Recordings & Transcripts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October - May</li> </ul>	Varied	Secondary
Field notes & Researcher's Reflective Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August - May</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Secondary
Other Supporting Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agendas</li> <li>Handouts</li> <li>Planning notes</li> <li>Emails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August - June</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Secondary
Participant Reflection Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August - May</li> </ul>	Ongoing	N/A

## Appendix K

### Sample Field Notes and Classroom Observation Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

What I am Seeing	What I am Thinking

## **Appendix L**

### **Interview Guide**

*Adopted from Richardson (1994b)*

#### Introduction

1. So how's it going? (Allow participant to share what is on his/her mind)
2. I'd like to have a conversation about your beliefs and practices. Specifically, I'd like to understand more about how they relate to what we are learning and doing in our weekly collaborative literacy coaching cadre. I'd like to begin by sharing what I observed when I was in your classroom. (Share 1<sup>st</sup> column only of field notes, "Seeing") Now let's talk about what I observed.

#### Observed Lesson

1. Tell me what you thought about this lesson. So how'd it go?
2. Describe your objective for this class. What was your goal?
3. How did you decide what your students would read/write/discuss/other?
4. What worked? Why do you think it worked?
5. What did not work? Why? What would you do differently?

#### Literacy Teaching

1. What is the content of your class? What do you think the content should be?
2. How would you describe the role of literacy within your content area?
3. How would you describe your role as a literacy teacher?
4. Describe how you addressed literacy teaching within this class.
5. How would you describe the role of text within your content area? How do you define text? Describe how you used text within this class.
6. What can you do to help your students read/write/comprehend/other? What did you do to help your students read/write/comprehend/other?

#### Students/Adolescent Learners

1. Describe your students/adolescents.
2. How do your students/adolescents learn?
3. What gets in the way of your students'/adolescents' learning?
4. What do your students/adolescents need?
5. What do good readers do? What do struggling readers do?

#### Collaborative Literacy Coaching

1. How would you describe CLC so far?
2. What's working? What do you like?
3. What's not working? What would you change? What would you do more or less of?
4. How has CLC influenced your beliefs or practices?